10/8/21, 9:22:40 AM

Compare Results

Old File:
18.2021 WG Vision Plan Draft.pdf 54 pages (3.79 MB)
5/22/21, 11:54:31 AM

versus

New File:
10.5.2021 West Glacier Vision Plan.pdf
73 pages (7.68 MB)
10/8/21, 8:52:43 AM

Total Changes

81

Text only comparison

Content

29

Replacements

33 Insertions

19 Deletions

Styling and Annotations

0 Stylin

0 Annotations

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[Old]: "May" [New]: "September"

Land Acknowledgment

A land acknowledgement is a statement that formally recognizes the historical and continuing connection between indigenous peoples and their native lands. It is an important social justice and decolonial practice that promotes indigenous visibility and honors those who have stewarded Montana's land for generations. In this spirit, we acknowledge that the lands and waters of this great state
are the traditional homelands of many tribes.

As a vision plan, this is particularly relevant. This plan captures the particular vision of this community at one point of time and in response to the intuitive perception of growth and impacts that became overwhelming to a small community of roughly 300. We must assume that this plan would likely be different if conducted at any number of points in time with different peoples in the past, especially with our Indigenous predescessors wh did not own the lands, but respected and stewarded them in harmony nonetheless.

We would like to begin by acknowledging that this place is the traditional land of the Siksitaisitapi (Sick-si-GAY-si-tapi), Kootenai (KOOt'-i-neh), Séliš (SEH'-leesh) and Qlispé (qw-leese-PEH) People. We offer this acknowledgement to recognize Indigenous peoples enduring connection to their traditional territories, to observe the history of the land that is currently shared by many peoples, and to recognize stewardship as a shared responsibility of all those who reside in a territory. We respect and honor the longstanding relationships these tribes and others have to this land, as they are its original caretakers.

For more information on these tribes, please see
https://www.nps.gov/glac/learn/historyculture/tribes.htm

and the Native American Speaks Program at
https://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/nas.htm

Acknowledgements

The 2020 West Glacier Vision Plan is the result of the enthusiasm, hard work and commitment of many individuals and groups in the community. They include those named below, but also many others from the West Glacier and greater Flathead County area:

West Glacier Planning Team

Mary T. McClelland, West Glacier Community Organizer

Monica Jungster, Montana House

Gary Rodgers, Pursuit

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Jeff Mow , Superintendent, Glacier National Park Mary Riddle, Chief of Planning, Glacier National Park

Patsy McEntee, NPS Rivers, Trails and Conserva Assistance

Thank You to the Flathead

and the Flathead County Co

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Middle Canyon Lan

Thank You to Our Technical Advisors Robert Davies, USFS

Rachel Schmidt, MT Office of Outdoor Recreati

Jan Stoddard, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development

Jenn Thompson, University of Montana Department of Society & Conservation Alicia Ulwelling, Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Onno Wieringa, Flathead Lakers

Stephen Frye, Fire Professional and Flathead Basin Commission Rick Trembath, Fire Professional

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Flathead Conservation Roundtable West Glacier Preservation Association

Dave Prunty, Flathead County Transportation Doug Mitchell, Glacier Conservancy

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Racene Friede, Glacier Country Tourism The Glacier Park Business Community Shelby & Dave Hampton, Glacier Outfitter

Aubrie Lorona, Discovery Center, Swan Mountain Outfitters Denny Gignoux, Glacier Guides and Montana Raft Company

Text Replaced

[Old]: "Assisstance Program" [New]: "Assistance Program Flathead County Planning and Zoning Committee (August 2021) Tyler Hoffman Verdell Jackson Buck Breckenridge Greg Stevens Jeff Larsen Sandra Nogal Elliot

MaryMcClelland

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Flathead County Transportation and Emergency Services Crown of the Continent Community of Practice

Kara Grau , Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research/UMT Diane Medler, 2020 Director of Kallispell Chamber of Commerce

Darwon Stoneman, Glacier Outdoor Center/Glacier Raft Company/Glacier Anglers Byron & Lee Beers, Great Northern Resort Alexa & Justin Carrol, Wild River Adventures

Table of Contents

Executive

Chapter 1: Introduction and

A. Why a Vision Plan?
B. Need for the Project Plan
C. Elements of the Plan
D. Planning Process

Chapter 2: West Glacier Community Profile

A. Area Description and History 12
B. Community Character and Aesthetics 14
C. Community Self-Identity 14
D. Demographics and Development Trends 14
E. Transportation, Connectivity and Environment 15
F. Forest Conditions, Wildfire and the Community 20
G. Relevant Planning Efforts 21

Chapter 3: West Glacier Vision: Goals, Principles and Actions 22

A. Goal 1: Preserve Community Character and Sense of Place 24
B. Goal 2: Create a Safe and Resilient Community 28
C. Goal 3: Enhance Community Communications and Participation 32
D. Goal 4: Support Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Opportunities 35
E. Goal 5: Provide Seamless Transportation Connections 40

Chapter 4: The Path Forward- Implementation 44

Appendix

A. Organizational Resource List
B. Mindmixer Public Engagement Feedback Summary and Comments
C. West Glacier Newsletter and Public Service Announcement
D. History of the 3 Forks of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River
E. Cooperative Management of the 3 Forks of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River
F. February 2020 Public Meeting Input
G. Public Engagement Schedule
H. Flathead County Planning Definitions, Terms and References
I. U.S. Department of Interior Commendation
J. Vision Key Themes and Ideas

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Executive Summary

The West Glacier Vision Plan (WGVP) reflects the community's passion for their heritage and energy for focusing efforts on resiliency and development that is compatible with a rural Montana environment. West Glacier identifies closely with long-standing connections to the pristine landscapes of Glacier National Park, the Middle Fork of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River and Flathead National Forest. As a result, each recommended action in the plan was carefully considered with the overarching vision to nurture and care for what exists in West Glacier today including the preservation of its wilderness qualities, natural resources, cultural and unique residential and recreational experience. West Glacier is the welcoming host to visitors to Glacier National Park, famous for its diversity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and wildlife, ancient sedimentary rock mountains, and old growth forests. The population of a few hundred residents along with the seasonal tourism businesses are the protectors and representatives of this community that have built their livelihood stewarding the rugged beauty that surrounds them.

Community Vision Statement:

West Glacier envisions their community as a place where recreation, healthy lifestyles and sustainable development converge to provide a high quality of life, while retaining unique historic character.

Conducting a visioning project through 2020 created planning challenges that ultimately did not alter the planning timeline. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way public outreach and engagement could be accomplished in later phases of the project due to the loss of in-person meetings. Fortunately, the planning team held a round of very successful in-person public and stakeholder engagement meetings in February 2020 and synthesized participants' comments. Because of the seasonality of many of West Glacier's businesses and residents, additional meetings had been planned for June when the maximum number of people from the community could be convened together. For health and safety concerns, it was then necessary to shift to a combination of virtual meetings and online engagement opportunities to gain additional feedback from a diverse cross-section of people. The project planning team reached out to part-time and long-time residents, vacation rental owners, business owners, government agencies and local non-profits

In addition to adapting the project planning process to accommodate challenges of the pandemic, it was also necessary for this team to coordinate closely on organizational challenges throughout the year. This working group proved beneficial to the community and each other for the sharing of information and highlighted the need for an ongoing collaborative multi-organizational working group to be formed as an outcome of this process.

From the variety of public feedback collected, several themes emerged around which community value statements evolved. Under each of these statements, action areas with specific strategies were developed as a means for accomplishing each goal. These goals included the following:

1. Preserve Community Character and Sense of Place
2. Create a Safe and Resilient Community
3. Enhance Community Communications and Participation
4. Support Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
5. Provide Seamless Transportation Connections

Moving Forward

While the planning team worked within the new parameters of the 2020 pandemic, there were many challenges in engaging all those with an interest in the future of West Glacier. Online tools and virtual meetings could not fully replace the focus group workshops that had been planned. As the community moves forward with the vision plan, there is a recognition that it is a living document that should be revisited and discussed fully and openly when people can safely meet again in person. The plan should also be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

As a community-driven plan, the WGVP has been developed to support focused collaborative work to preserve common core values of the community into the future. The intent of the Vision Plan is to focus planning efforts and policies to address current issues and future opportunities. It is a planning document that aids in making decisions on land use, redevelopment, public services, facilities, infrastructure, environment and community communications.

The project is a voluntary effort dependent on the collective, shared values of West Glacier residents and stakeholders. To achieve these goals will require that working groups organize around areas of interest in the action items identified in the plan.

With the communications channels that have been opened and the framework established, the community has a path to the shared imagined Vision. In order for the WGVP to be fully realized, it will need to go through a formal adoption process by Flathead County which can happen as either an addendum to the 1994 Canyon Plan or as a separate, stand-alone Neighborhood Plan. To this end, the development of the WGVP follows the prescribed guidelines of creating a neighborhood plan outlined in the Flathead County Growth Policy, including initial organizational meetings, identifying existing conditions, drafting the community vision, characteristics, and goals, and preparing the draft – all steps the WGVP has taken that will help it move forward into the future.

As this plan enters the next steps of County and public reviews and comment period, the final route to adoption will be determined and communicated. We invite feedback and discussion on all parts of this plan and offer the opportunity for any individual or organization to participate in support of these goals.

Read on and discover what the future holds for this special place.

WEST GLACIER
45

Chapter 1: Introduction and Project Background

A. Why a Vision Plan? Why Does it Matter?

The West Glacier Vision Plan (WGVP) is a community-driven planning project with the aim of establishing the core values of the community so that strategies to retain desired conditions may be developed. This plan builds upon previous planning efforts and creates a roadmap for future planning. The Vision Plan's intent is to refocus planning efforts and policies to address current issues and future opportunities. It is a policy document that aids in making decisions on land use, redevelopment, public services, facilities, environment and community communications.

The West Glacier Vision Plan recommends a multitude of policies to take advantage of new and unique opportunities while staying true to the community's roots to provide the best quality of life for residents, visitors, employees, and businesses. For the Vision Plan to remain effective, it must be regularly reviewed and updated to address current standards, goals and strategies, and future needs, as well as to provide updated social, economic, and environmental sustainability elements. Furthermore, it is essential that the Plan remains current with changing local, regional, and global conditions.

This Plan is Important to:

Locals and Visitors:
The Vision Plan identifies community character elements and locations for improvements to community identity and visitor awareness.

Business and Property Owners:
The Vision Plan provides direction on the topics of development, policies, programs, natural environment, and services to be planned for with the County and other Flathead Valley communities for a sustainable future.

County Officials:
The Vision Plan will give guidance on county-level planning proposals and ways to implement and activate the plan.

B.Elements of the Plan:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background: This section describes the reason for the plan and its organization. The planning and public process are described, as well as the intent for how the plan will affect change.

Chapter 2: West Glacier Community Profile: This section provides the background and "memory" of the community, noting its development and existing conditions that create both challenges and opportunities.

Chapters 3: The Desired Future Conditions for West Glacier: Goals, Principles, Actions and Strategies: This chapter articulates the goals identified by the community, describes the principles that support them and the actions and strategies the community may pursue to reach those goals.

Chapter 4: The Path Forward: Implementation: This section discusses the challenges and opportunities of implementing the vision and how to keep it relevant for the future.

C. Need for the Project Plan and Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to identify key community values for West Glacier that can guide planning and policy improvements, aiding in decision-making.

on community character, land use, development and redevelopment, public services and facilities, economic development and transportation. The plan is intended to be both visionary and practical. The Plan will be reviewed annually and updated periodically to continue to reflect the vision and priorities of the community. Implementation of the Vision Plan will require further action from the community, staff, Planning Commission, County Planning Department, County Commissioners and partners, as necessary.

West Glacier is the small gateway community at Glacier National Park's (GNP) west entrance. Since 2016, it is now host to unprecedented visitation over the summer months between June-September and thousands of visitors and vehicles per day. For decades, the quaint community and outdoor recreation-oriented businesses have been able to maintain the rural, historic and iconic appearance that visitors have enjoyed and expected. West Glacier is also bordered by the Flathead Wild and Scenic River (specifically the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River) which have also experienced significant growth in outdoor recreational use. Together with Waterton Lakes National Park, GNP is the world's first legislated International Peace Park (IPP), a World Heritage Site, International Biosphere Reserve and the first transboundary Gold Tier International Dark Sky Park. Waterton-Glacier IPP lie at the center of the Crown of the Continent transboundary ecosystem, about 18 million acres that straddles the international boundary between Canada and the US.

In 2016, during the National Park Service Centenial, Glacier National Park had a record 3 million visitors in a single year for the first time (Annual Park Recreation Visitation, 2017). Residents of the gateway community of West Glacier woke up to the reality that the number of visitors was more than the population of the city of

Chicago, all funneling through the singular two-lane collector road of West Glacier's "Main St", the start of the Going-to-the-Sun-Road (GTSR) before it enters Glacier National Park. Visitation increases in prior decades were more gradual, easier to absorb and manage. This surge is attributed to a number of factors including the public's ease of mobility, increased international travelers, social media, a shuttle system on the GTSR that began in 2007, and the promotions and celebrations conducted nationwide by state and tourism partners for the NPS 100th birthday.

While the community's history is so closely tied to the park and the bustle of summer visitors have always been part of West Glacier's way of life, this dramatic increase in visitation felt overwhelming. This new normal brought with it a new question. How would West Glacier maintain its unassuming character and values for recreation, a high quality of life, simple historic charm and resiliency amidst wild and natural scenic beauty? How would the community on the doorstep of the Glacier National Park maintain this sense of place and stewardship?

A new study published in the Journal of the American Planning Association shows that numerous towns across the Intermountain West were struggling with growth issues before COVID-19 hit, "leading to some problems traditionally thought of as urban issues, like lack of affordable housing, availability of public transit, conges- tion, and income inequality."[1]

West Glacier residents value and acknowledge their authenticity, especially when their home is put into the context of other gateway communities. Residents look at other gateway communities and observe conditions that West Glacier doesn't have – and doesn't want. When they visit these places, they see what could be a possible future and it raises serious concern. When a gateway community had yielded to the pressures of an increasing tourist population and impatient development, the town no longer had the same safe and comfortable character for those that lived there – or for the visitors either. This plan is a response to these concerns and a community agreement to work collaboratively towards a common vision of the future.

D. Planning Process

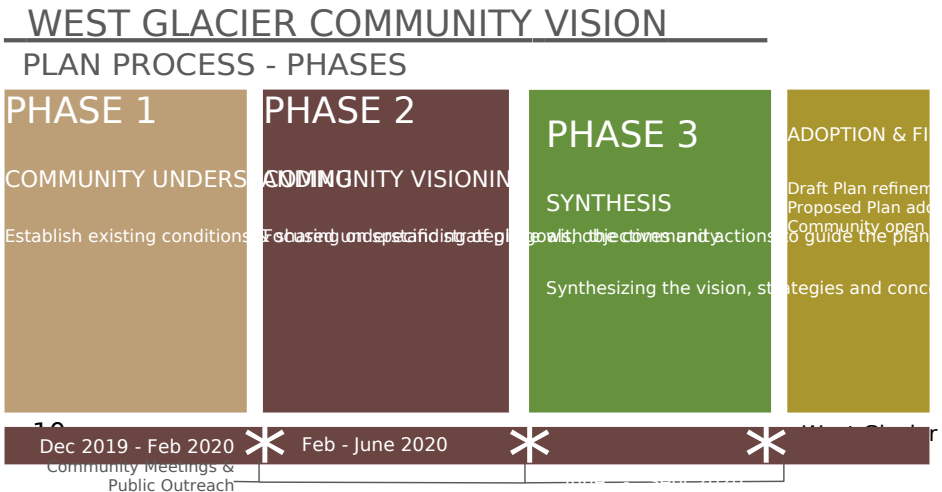
Flathead County is home to a wide variety of residents and businesses, all that feel a special attachment to the forests and valleys of their surroundings. From the scenic natural landscape of the terrain that rises above the area to the riparian environment fed by the Three Forks of the Flathead River, there is an inherent draw to recreation and enjoyment of free time throughout the Flathead Valley. This planning process encouraged an open dialogue about West Glacier and its meaning to both local residents and the other communities of Flathead County.

1 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2020.1791728

The planning process was led by the community through Mary T. McClelland, a local community organizer with the support from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA), a community-based design and planning arm of the NPS offering technical assistance grants. Early in the process, the project goals inspired a number of partners to dedicate resources and agree to support the planning process. The planning team worked together throughout 2020 and remained committed through the Covid 19 pandemic crisis to maintain focus on the community goals and continuing outreach. This team included the West Glacier community organizer, Flathead County Planning Department, National Park Consevation Association, Glacier National Park, Montana House, Pursuit Inc, USFS Hungry Horse Ranger District and RTCA. The entities worked collaboratively through the process on all planning tasks and in soliciting and responding to public feedback. The creation of the leadership team of stakeholders was recognized as an important step to improving community communications and awareness of the community issues.

D. Public Involvement

The West Glacier Vision Planning Team has been committed to an equitable and transparent planning process for the public and realize that a community- supported plan is one that will be more sustainable. As a result, this planning process was structured to allow for as much community project awareness and feedback as possible in order to educate and engage residents with varying backgrounds and interests in the community. The community advertised the project and public meetings through numerous newspaper features, highlighting the issues at hand and provided a variety of opportunities for engagement, discussion and feedback.



The following Public Engagement Methods were used:

- Mindmixer Interactive engagement website
- Stakeholder focus discussion groups
- (2) In-person public meetings (February 2020)
- Public Zoom meeting (August 2020)
- Dozens of 1:1 conversations
- Biweekly planning team meetings
- Regular project communication and updates through newspaper coverage
- A part-time and full -time residents' mailing to share project information and Covid and wildfire safety information

The week of February 10, 2020 was a very productive week of stakeholder and public meetings. A great deal of information was synthesized and spoke clearly to the five goal statements developed in this plan. This information also supported the vision statement articulated in this plan. While the original public engagement strategy envisioned more public meetings in June, the Covid 19 Pandemic prevented the use of in-person public meetings later in the process. As a result, the Planning Team reached out to stakeholder groups to review parts of the plan that were of specific importance to them. In this way, the project continued to gain feedback and content, resulting in this draft plan.

E. How Does The Plan Work?

Developed through a dynamic, community-driven planning process, the West Glacier Vision is built around five ision Goals:

1: Preserve Community Character and Sense of Place 2: Create a Safe and Resilient Community 3: Enhance Community Communications and Participation 4: Support Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Opportunities 5: Provide Seamless Transportation Connections

These goals create the general structure for the Plan. Within the chapters, each theme is further supported by its principles, illustrative framework map(s), and strategies. While the goals are separated into individual chapters, they are intertwined and often refer back to each other's success as linked.

In order for the West Glacier Vision Plan (WGVP) to be fully utilized, it will need to go through a formal adoption process. The Vision Plan is an official document of policy with an adoption process that can be

accomplished by an making it an Addendum to the 1994 Canyon Plan.

More details on this can be found in Chapter 4, The Path Forward-Implementation.

VISION AND GOAL STATEMENTS

A vision is a big-picture statement communicating the future of an area or community, compelling action by identifying what matters most to the community.

Goal statements identify the shared values and desired outcomes that the community wants to focus on. Goals are outcome statements that define what an organization is trying to accomplish, both programmatically and organizationally.

The five Goal Statements in Chapter 3 were developed through a series of community and stakeholder conversations, and represent the aspirational outlook for West Glacier's future. They are overarching statements that describe the desired future of the area based on shared community values.

PRINCIPLES

Principles are guiding characteristics, assumptions or facts that help us understand the parameters of the goal. The Principles fall under each of the goal statements to elaborate on the future setting, character, and opportunities for the

community for the next 10 to 15 years.

ACTIONS AREAS AND STRATEGIES

The Strategies are the last and most specific component of the plan and are expressed as part of the action areas that group related action priorities for each goal area. A Strategy is a statement of intent or expectation—a course of action that provides clarity on the methods for achieving the Principles. The action priorities are expressed within Chapter 3 and are grouped under action areas.

Special

- ***This plan is not regulatory:*** This document is a vision document that provides a planning roadmap fo
  the community values
  identified in the plan. It is not a regulatory document in any way; all regulatory changes still proceed thr
- Land Use and Flathead
  County Planning
  processes.

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"Special Notes • This plan is not regulatory: This document is a vision document that provides a planning roadmap for planning work that supports the community values identified in the plan. It is not a regulatory document in any way; all

Chapter 2: West Glacier Community Profile

AREA DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

West Glacier is an unincorporated community and census-designated place (CDP) in eastern Flathead County, Montana, at an elevation of 3,169 feet (966 m). The town is at the west entrance to Glacier National Park and is located on
U.S. Route 2 and a main line of the BNSF Railway. The West Glacier community is tucked into the Middle Fork of the Flathead River corridor that is also the southwest boundary of Glacier National Park. Through this corridor flows east and westbound traffi on Hwy 2 as well as the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad. West Glacier is an area of approximately 3 sq mi. almost entirely surrounded by National Forest and National Park designated public lands.

The West Glacier gateway community is located within the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System in the Middle Canyon Region of Flathead County. The Middle Canyon Region encompasses the communities of Lake Five and West Glacier and more specifically described as being all that land lying easterly of the Flathead River in Sections 1-17 of Township 31 N, Range 19 W, P.M.M., Flathead County, Montana and those portions of Sections 26, 27, 34, 35, 36 of Township 32 N, Range 19 W, P.M.M., Flathead County, Montana lying southerly of the Flathead River.

As many Glacier National Park visitors eagerly make their way to enter the park, many do not realize that moments before taking their iconic photo at the park entrance sign, they had traveled through a small community with a history closely tied to the park.

The community of West Glacier, formerly known as Belton, owes its existence both to the extension of the Great Northern Railway through the Canyon and to the development and designation of Glacier National Park. The railroad station, originally only an old boxcar, was established in 1891, the same year the railway was established. The Great Northern Railway line reached Columbia Falls in 1892 and soon stretched all the way to the West Coast. By 1898, a new store-saloon was operated near the station. The post offic was established in 1900. Many of the residents receiving mail appeared to be rangers, guides and packers.

The Belton Station “served local residents, businesses, and a growing number of tourists.” In some ways, Belton/West Glacier was always a stopping off point for Glacier National Park tourists. The Park was created in 1910, and in the same year, the Great Northern Railway constructed “both the main Belton Chalet and the new train depot.” The depot was the center of the town’s activity in those days, especially in the summer, as visitors arrived for their stay in the national park.”

Before the establishment of Glacier National Park, the railroad and the arrival of the homesteaders, native people inhabited the area, including the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. What was originally tribal homelands is now known as Apgar, on the shores of an ancient water body known as Lake McDonald.

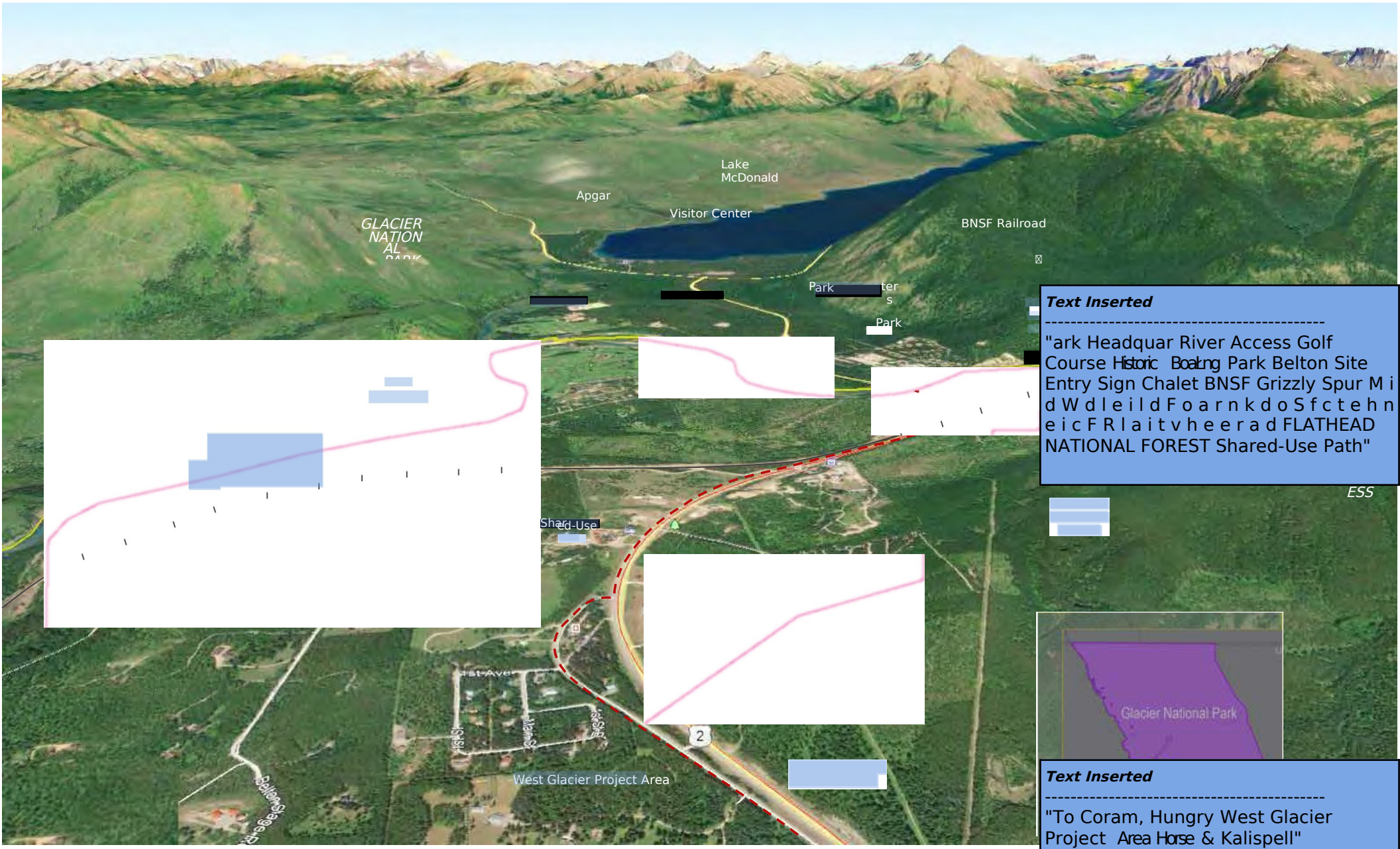
Eventually, homesteaders and other white settlers arrived to the area in the early 1890s. One of the early settlers of West Glacier recalled in a historical interview that “there was an old Indian trail that the Blackfeet and Flathead Indians traditionally used to cross the mountains and Marias Pass that ran right in back of her present home.” According to the account, she remembered one of the last times the Indians came through circa 1915.

Over the next forty years, the infrastructure in and around Belton continued to grow. Roads were built, buildings were constructed, and the layout of the town literally shifted (approximately 500 yards to the west). A road connected the Flathead Valley and Belton in 1911, and the Going-to-the-Sun Road saw its completion in 1932. In 1938 the Belton Mercantile opened a new store along the new entrance which led to a new bridge that led visitors over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and into Glacier National Park. The stores in town saw new ownership too. In 1946, the Lundgren brothers (Dan, Ev and Conrad) partnered with David Thompson and purchased Belton Mercantile Properties. During the WWII years visitation was slow and in 1949 Belton changed its name to West Glacier, one that would help tourists in identifying its geography.

In 1949, the community included many employees of the U.S. Forest Service, Glacier National Park and Civilian Conservation Corps. By 1951, the population had increased to 300, and it later declined slightly through the 1950s and early 1960s. According to the State Historic Preservation Office there are two sites of historic significance in West Glacier. One is the Belton Chalets and the other is Belton Railway Depot, currently home to the Glacier Natural History Association. The Belton Chalets are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original silver bridge was built in 1937 (when the Old Bridge route was no longer the park main entrance) and then silver bridge was destroyed in the 1964 flood and rebuilt in 1965.[1]

Locals report that from the early 1900s to the 1970s, there was “one cohesive community” of park workers and West Glacier residents. There were winter parties, dances, a ski club, ice fishing, card games and school plays as well as ‘potlucks’, movie nights and roller-skating in the GNP Headquarters Community Building. In the 60s, park employees and West Glacier residents would meet at “the regular old Montana watering hole, Freda’s.”

1 “At the Foot of Belton Hills” by Ted Catton, University of Montana History Dept., 2012.



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In the 90's, with the development of the Citizen Initiated Zoning District (resulting in the Canyon Plan and Canyon Area Regulatory System that became part of the Flathead County Plan) these precautions were stated in writing. That "Growth cannot continue forever within the context of finite resources, so economic 'growth' cannot be a long-term goal, however, economic stability can be achieved." There evolved a "collective understanding residents and businesses share in a conservative approach towards development and uphold those values that include air quality, water quality, wildlife diversity and low-impact recreation. And the practices that will help determine the density and character of development that will avoid degradation of values."

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND AESTHETICS

There are many factors that contribute to a community's character and culture. The physical realm and built environment are just as important to this character as the events, public processes, and those friendly hellos on the street. Architecture, landscape, arts, music and outdoor recreation all play an increasingly critical role in the community's character. West Glacier is an authentic mountain community with a culture defined by and fundamentally linked to its surrounding natural environment and rural heritage.

CHARACTER AREAS

GOING TO THE SUN ROAD (GTSR), WEST GLACIER'S "MAIN STREET"

West Glacier is overwhelmingly defined by US-2 and the intersection with GTSR which also serves as the community's "Main Street". The GTSR main street is one of the hamlet's more pedestrian-scaled areas, with outdoor seating and landscaped areas between public sidewalks and building fronts. However, the overall feel of the area is still dominated by vehicular and transportation needs, both in terms of access to the park, the BNSF overpass and the scale of US Hwy
2. Businesses along Hwy 2 have large building setbacks and parking lots in front of many of the buildings.

Recent improvements to the GTSR main street corridor have improved pedestrian visibility and awareness though the main street still functions as the last commercial zone before reaching the park, roughly one mile from the BNSF overpass.

The aesthetic of West Glacier main street can be attributed largely to the Lundgren family and David Thompson who established and preserved the "Swiss Chalet" mountain village architectural style that proliferated across Europe in the 19th century.[2] This effort gives the hamlet a clearly defined, cohesive architectural character which contributes to its authentic look and feel.

2 https://artsandcraftshomes.com/house-styles/the-swiss-chalet-1885-1910

The predominant public spaces within the community consist of outdoor seating areas along the West Glacier stretch of GTSR, between the BNSF overpass and the bridge over the Middle Fork of the Flathead road bridge.The surrounding public lands offer extensive trail and outdoor recreation areas to hike, bike, fish, raft, and enjoy the surrounding natural environment.

The preservation of West Glacier's small-scale development and architectural authenticity was so noteworthy that in 1987, the Lundgren family received an award from the US Department of Interior, which recognized their simple approach that blended with the character of the park. It was a special commendation for "sheltering and protecting the West Entrance of Glacier National Park from inappropriate development and for maintaining the village historic character."[3] (See Appendix I). This charming and straightforward approach to growth in the village of West Glacier managed to "keep business simple". But what started out as unintentional limited growth born from sheer necessity, became a long-term preservation of small scale residential and commercial development. For nearly 70 years the family's operational approach made it work and it became part of the experience for visitors heading to Glacier National Park. The second generation of West Glacier main street business owners recognized the place- based value for maintaining the historic aesthetic of the businesses.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The hamlet's residential areas can be described as primarily private homes that tend to occupy larger, more wooded lots with dedicated garage parking. These areas are notable for their lack of internal and external connectivity, specifically sidewalks or internal pedestrian/bike paths, although they could benefit from enhanced pedestrian and bike connections.

3 Peterson, 2014; Crown of the Continent Geotourism Program

Neighborhoods are characterized by winding roads and steep topography and most homes are hidden from view from the major roadways. This gives the appearance that the majority of properties are commercial; thereby hiding the long-standing residential community that thrives quietly beyond the surface.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

West Glacier's community includes residents, visitors to Glacier NP, and long-time businesses such as the Mercantile. There are also many businesses that have stood for decades providing guided access to the river and trails as well as food, refreshments and other visitor needs. These river and trail stewards are also an integral part of the well-being of West Glacier.

The intent of Flathead County's 1994 Canyon Plan (Neighborhood Plan) was to keep development centralized, to limit highway strip development and to insulate West Glacier from the hustle and bustle of sprawl so evident in other gateways. This development is also limited by the large tracts of USFS lands that buffer West Glacier from other communities. The 1994 Middle Canyon Land Use Plan is the zoning and regulatory plan that has helped guide business and is noted as the chief reason commercial uses and development have remained small scale.

West Glacier's business growth is largely self-limiting for two reasons: one, because of the limited private commercial property available in an area made up primarily of federal public lands. The second reason is because of the extreme seasonality of the area; Glacier National Park is largely inaccessible to visitors in the winter while the GTSR is impassible by snow. With only limited access from Apgar, few businesses are open through Glacier's off season. Less than a third of residents reside in West Glacier through the winter months. As a result, businesses that consider West Glacier as a place to develop, must make enough from June to October to be profitable year-round

In 2014 the Lundgren Family sold West Glacier Mercantile to Glacier Park Incorporated (GPI), the former concessionaire for Glacier National Park (GNP) for more than thirty years. GPI was favored because they understood that keeping West Glacier in historic and iconic context is good for business.[4] GPI's parent company, Pursuit, maintains that they intend to keep that mission to "connect people to iconic places through unforgettable and inspiring experiences", and as stewards of West Glacier Village they understand the responsibility to preserve the qualities that make it such an inspirational place for visitors and residents.

Pursuit intends to preserve their “core fundamentals in West Glacier and draw inspiration from the quaint and historic nature of the village.” This small community has had a long and celebrated history of not just hosting GNP visitors, to Glacier National Park but “welcoming them with a unique and genuine charm. Whether rehabilitating structures in need of repair or developing new experiences.” Pursuit has pledged a commitment to approach change with a “sincere mindfulness of those attributes.”

These and other business changes along with the growing number of visitors now passing through West Glacier intensifies the pressures and development issues on this unique and finite place.

OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

Today, a community presence persists, despite the number of part time residents and visitors. Over time the community feel has shifted as a result of many small changes: the TV was invented, it is no longer mandatory for park employees to live at headquarters, there are many more part-time and seasonal residents and the rise of social media has affected social behavior. And yet, this small rural community continues to maintain life-long residents committed to maintaining the qualities that create lasting impact on all those who pass through.

There is a great sense of community responsibility in West Glacier because of its proximity to the Park. Residents realize they are not the only ones who care about preserving that sense of place, the greater community, the businesses, the visitors and surrounding stakeholders all benefit from taking care of West Glacier– it is a value shared by communities ‘down the line’ and into the Flathead Valley and throughout the state of Montana to preserve this place into the

4 The Beacon,Tristan Scott, 2014; Glacier National Park Travel Guide, Perry

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[Old]: "of" [New]: "up"

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[Old]: "Glacier 4 The Beacon, by Tristan Scott, 2014; Glacier National Park Travel Guide by Perry Rosenbloom, 2014.. National Park but “welcoming them with a unique and genuine charm. Whether" [New]: "Glacier National Park but “welcoming

COMMUNITY SELF-IDENTITY

During the February 10 and 12 West Glacier Community meetings, the group of local residents engaged in an activity where they could describe their community as the “host of a party.”

> “If West Glacier hosted a party, what kind of a host would it be? What music would be playing? Food served? Kinds of activities?”

At the West Glacier meeting, descriptions included the following:

Bonfires and Beethoven, love September with a sigh of relief, I want versu
have to, helpful of neighbors, hosting the party vs attending, potluck in the back- yard with a bonfire. In winter go south, fleece gloves, scarf, boots, coffee, in recovery, peaceful, calm, periods of quiet, hibernation. Summer, life of the party, talk to people visiting, excitement, energy, smiles – all are on vacation, conflicted, protective, exhausted visitors, make me take a second look and be appreciative, locals know the back ways and secret spots.

Potluck- everyone is welcome, sharing stories, no exaggerations, add tourist incidents as anecdotes. Creating balance of winter and summer and respectful environment and people sophistication, pride, resilience, history and culture party, personal and relationship-oriented. Would end early, the host is a local that invites random visitors over, local is a mentor and role model, leave no trace – cleans up, night sky party- very protective and possessive of the area, futuristic, bringing history and culture into the future, party is an opportunity for networking with anyone.

At the Kalispell meeting, descriptions included the following:

Bipolar, crazy and peaceful, would wear outdoor clothing, emergence coffee, water, microbrew, tolerance, fun, dangerous, open minded, nature- con- nected hanging out on the porch, connected with God, spiritual, mix of traditions and the park. Open versus closed, wallflowe , caring and protective, hard-work- ing, local and crafty, other-people focused not digitally obsessed. Self-aware and world aware.

DEMOGRAPHICS & CENSUS DATA

Figures from the 2020 US Census yielded the following key

- Household size has decreased. Median age has decreased.
- Family growth has been greatest where affordable housing is available.
- The aging population and influx of retirees continue to outpace the growth of the other demographic sectors.

West Glacier has approximately 221 full-time residents as of the 2020 census. Median resident age: 59 years Montana median age: 39.9 years. Countywide, the population has increased from 74,471 in 2000, to an estimated 90,928 in 2010, to 104,357 in 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[5] Native Montanans are now greatly out numbered by new residents. A large percentage of new residents are retirees and middle aged professionals.

Estimated median household income in 2020:[5] West Glacier: $63,750 MT: $56,539 Estimated median house value in 2020:
West Glacier: $422,200 MT: $261,500
Mean prices in 2020: all housing units: $360,249; detached houses: $382,400; Median gross rent in 2020: $650
March 2019 cost of living index in West Glacier: 88.2 (less than average, U.S. average is 100)
Percentage of residents living in poverty in 2019: 5.6%.

A short distance from any developed area is Glacier National Park, Flathead National Forest, designated wilderness areas, many options for hiking on federal and state lands, designated hiking areas, 2 ski resorts, 8 golf courses, Flathead Lake, and Hungry Horse Reservoir. With the abundance of recreational oppor-tunities and aesthetic values, it is not hard to see why Flathead County is the among the fastest growing, and the 3rd most populated county in Montana.

Colleges and universities nearest to West Glacier include Flathead Community College, Blackfeet Community College, Salish Kootenai College, and the Univer-sity of Montana in Missoula.

5 https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/flatheadcountymontana/PST045219, http://ww . city-data.com/city/West-Glacier-Montana.html

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN/ZONING MIX

Located in Northwest Montana, Flathead County encompasses 3,262,720 acres or 5,098 square miles. Approximately 94% of the land mass is National or State Forest Land, Wilderness, Agricultural, and Corporate Timber Land, thus confi - ing development to the remaining 6% of the area.

The most significant event that shaped the current development pattern was a natural disaster in the form of the Flood of ’64, a 500 year flood which devastated the area around Glacier Park and beyond. Eventually, the water receded, and the damage was assessed and repaired. What remains today is a West Glacier that continues to resemble the Belton of the 1930s.

HOUSING

The Town population contains an interesting mix of both full- and part-time residents, with a significant majority of all housing units owned by Montana residents. There is some ownership outside the state and a few international holdings. Additionally, the town has little diversity in the availability of current housing inventory. All existing housing stock consists of single-family detached dwellings.

According to the Flathead Beacon:
“In May 2020,115 sales closed in Flathead County. In June, that number increased to 2,124. Compared to the same two-month period last year, closed sales are up by 408, or nearly 11 percent. And remember, the real estate market had a solid year in 2019.”[6]

It is estimated that perhaps 20% of the housing stock is owned by full time residents. Consistent with other intermountain west communities, there are increasing numbers of second homeowners who, upon retirement, become part- time residents. According to Air DNA, West Glacier’s zip code area has 63 homes that are rented out through Airbnb and VRBO.[7]

Of West Glacier’s housing units, resident-occupied units are decreasing as short- term rentals have increased (VRBO, Airbnb, etc.). The area has a significant shortage of workforce housing which is exacerbated by park visitation rates which has motivated the growth in short term rentals. The discrepancy between workforce housing needs in the community and suitable housing availability is perhaps best illustrated by the current (2020) community and business discussions about how the CALURS zoning plan may be adapted to allow “work camps” for seasonal workers.

6 https://flatheadbeacon.com/2020/07/16/the-great-migration
7 https://www.airdna.co/vacation-rental-data/app/us/montana/west-glacier/59936/overview

Issues and Opportunities

•A shortage of workforce housing impacts both the economic sustainability and culture of the community.

• As the STR population increases, longtime residents have felt the strain of los- ing the “community-minded” respectful behavior they enjoyed for so long.

•Much of the existing housing stock used for employee housing has been turned over to the more lucrative business of Short Term Rentals.

• Due to the closure of most of the Park during the winter and a lack of a year- round population, it is difficul to sustain most businesses and many were estab- lished as seasonal businesses through the CALURS Plan.

•There is a lack of clearly defined community gateways, branding, and wayfin - ing throughout the Town.

• The limited amount of designated social gathering spaces impacts West Gla- cier’s sense of identity and opportunities to tell West Glacier’s story to visitors.

• Residential growth patterns over time have not trended toward planned de- velopment which can be used to encourage walkability, transit use, and a more vibrant community. Housing clusters and individual businesses are significantly separated and require driving between destinations.

• Maintenance of a unified design aesthetic through the corridor, landscape/ streetscape and wayfinding/ dentity elements can help create a cohesive con- nection.

TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIONS

A balanced, multi-modal system is needed to provide options for residents and visitors alike. People choose transportation based on many different factors

including destination, speed, convenience, weather, and even baggage for those traveling through. A person may choose different modes depending upon their needs on any particular day, and the best transportation systems make those choices available and easy. A flexible system responds to both existing and future needs. Existing needs demand a system that can respond to seasonal changes in volume, pattern, and mode. Future flexibility requires thoughtful consideration of how both user expectation and technology changes may impact physical systems.

Getting Around Town

US Highway 2 is the main highway passing east-west through West Glacier. It circumvents the southern border of Glacier marked by the Middle Fork of the Flathead, a designated Wild and Scenic River. But when visitors turn off the Highway onto Going-to-the-Sun-Road that passes under the BNSF Railroad overpass, they enter into a different time and world. As the main transportation corridor for the park, this early stretch of GTSR serves as both an entrance road and a local main street, and visitors associate the GTSR businesses (owned by Pursuit) with the park and the style of architecture found within the park boundary. As a result, many don't recognize West Glacier as a community in itself. Pedestrian and bicycle crossing opportunities are limited, with the distance between marked crosswalks being approximately 140 feet. Rafters carry paddles and gear from the nearby Middle Fork of the Flathead River back and forth along the narrow sidewalks between their parked cars and rafting outfitters access points.

Issues

- Existing low-density residential development patterns, combined with winding roads and topography, make comprehensive transit coverage challenging.
- Non-vehicular linkages abound within the County but are not completely linked as a system. There are places along the Gateway to Glacier Trail and through West Glacier where it is unclear if cyclists should ride on the highway shoulder, mix with traffic, or ride on the sidewal
- "Main Street" sidewalks provide pedestrian access through the business area, but connectivity overall is varied and often sub-optimal.
- Designated pedestrian and bicycle crossing opportunities across Main Street are limited. Two lighted pedestrian crossings were added, but a comprehensive study was never completed.
- The area's paved bicycle system is limited to the Gateway to Glacier Trail which narrows and ends at the BNSF Overpass.
- Regional transit service has no central point or facility for transfer between local bus, regional bus, private shuttles, and other potential or future options.
- Parking has been limited and competes with the needs of the rafting companies.

Opportunities

- Additional pedestrian connections to and along Main Street can be implemented to improve non-vehicular connections throughout West Glacier.
- This would reduce the number of pedestrian conflict points
- Several developments oriented towards main street offer opportunities to rethink the public realm through pedestrian-focused design. Recent removal of parallel parking and addition of pedestrian crossings has created better vehicular visibility and a safer pedestrian environment.
- A Regional Transit Center in the County is needed for regional transit options, private shuttles, and other potential or future options.
- Completing the Gateway to Glacier Trail can provide a continuous connection through Town and increase the vitality and safety of the community.

Getting Around the Region

In rural Montana, roads are not built for high volume traffic There also exists an expectation that a visitor comes prepared for limited services. West Glacier is unlike other gateway “towns” that supply the full service selection to visitors. The closest town to offer a wide selection of sevices is Columbia Falls and choices become more limited as visitors travel closer to the park.

Residents and visitors are primarily motor vehicle-reliant though Amtrak offers regular service via the Empire Builder train route running east and west between Seattle and Chicago, passing alongside Glacier National Park. Stops are in East Glacier, West Glacier (Belton) and Whitefish

Shuttles within Glacier National Park run from Apgar Visitor Center to St. Mary Visitor Center, heading up and over the Going-to-the-Sun Road. These shuttles are free and are great for hikers and bikers. There are also cheap ($5-10) shuttles that travel from Whitefish, Columbia Falls and Kalispell to Glacier National Park. There is also a transit system that serves as a collaboration between the park and Eagle Transit of Flathead County.

ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES

While not many amenities and recreational opportunities exist within West Glacier limits, it is part of the larger Flathead Valley that provides abundant public lands and trails that draw both residents and visitors to the community.

Issues and Opportunities

- Public access to the Middle Fork of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River is a key amenity in West Glacier, serving both commercial and private recreational needs. The riparian corridor is also valuable habitat for wildlife and bird watching.

- The Flathead Valley Trails Plan, completed in 2014, outlines priority trails.
- The community has the desire to support protecting the natural features of the area, such as air quality, water quality, and scenic views.

Wildlife

West Glacier is surrounded by a million acres of wilderness in the form of Glacier National Park and the Great Bear Wilderness. These unique ecosystems are bridged by the Wild & Scenic Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Together these conditions make an incredibly rich habitat for wildlife including elk, deer, mountain lion, grizzly and black bear, wolf, bald eagle, and many other migratory and native birds and small mammals. The community should protect wildlife, habitat, movement corridors, and scenic vistas. When development occurs it should be sized, located, and designed to avoid or limit impacts to wildlife and the natural environment. The Canyon and CALURS plans identified the need to plan for the integration of humans into the habitat of the many species that inhabit the area: The following descriptions of habitat in the Canyon are from the Canyon Plan:

The abundance, variety, and distribution of wildlife is largely infuenced by the quality, variety, quantity, and availability of habitat. These variables differ throughout the Canyon. In some instances, wildlife habitat is occupied by conflicting uses. In many situations, the habitats of the Canyon serve specialized seasonal needs or may provide important travel linkages between other regional destinations. The presence of several Threatened & Endangered species in the region greatly influences local land use and resource management decisions Montana Department of Natural Resources and Environment should be consulted for current resource maps pertaining to wildlife and vegetation. Please refer to the maps during discussion of the ensuing topics.

Habitat in the Canyon is capable of supporting such big game species as elk, mule deer, white-tail deer, moose, mountain goat, and black bear. Generally, elk and mule deer summer in the upper elevations of major drainages and use mid-slope cover to seek security and thermal relief. White-tail deer and moose select the lower elevations associated with riparian habitat. In general, south to west facing slopes are favored as wintering sites for a variety of reasons. Spring ungulate ranges can vary widely depending on the amount of snowfall during the winter as well as the amount of warm, sunny weather during the early spring. The spring ranges tend to include at least some portion of the winter range as well as those drainage bottoms that contain grass/forb openings. It is the “green-up” areas that will attract ungulate animals in the early spring. As ungulates begin changing their diet primarily from a woody diet of shrubs/trees to grass/forbs, ungulates will generally go for the low elevation, snow-free, grass/forb abundant habitats.

Habitats vary widely with regard to elevational location from year to year. For some herd groups, there are traditional sites, for others young may be born on sites that are “on the way” to summer ranges. One approach is to combine the winter range with the spring range for purpose of showing the relationship between the two. The idea is to avoid impacting these considerably overlapping habitats. In other words, it’s not a matter of only impacting one range or the other, unplanned development needs to support both winter and spring ranges. Travel corridors and linkage zones are based on the assumption that large mammals use drainages as natural movement zones. Not only bears, but mammals such as mountain lions, wolves, wolverines, and lynx, make use of drainages for travel routes. Blocks of mature and old growth forest provide linkages across the Middle Fork Valley for a host of species that achieve higher densities and productivity levels in those forest age classes.

Recreation

The primary recreation activities in West Glacier and throughout the surrounding National Forest are hiking, rafting, fishing and cross-country skiing. The Flathead River is another recreational opportunity for activities such as fishing, hiking, and raft and boat trips. Local campgrounds include those in the Forest Service Hungry Horse Ranger District, Glacier National Park, KOA and other privately

West Glacier is an authentic mountain community with a culture defined by and fundamentally linked to its surrounding natural, wild environment. The community is firmly rooted in its relationship to the surrounding national forest, its trails, and its stunning views. This relationship is both the community's past and its future, and it is critical to integrate this relationship into every aspect of the area's decision-making process, from physical infrastructure projects, to economic development goals, to policy and governance. Each one of us, whether consciously or not, seeks a place where we feel at home. For many of the people in West Glacier, home has been defined by the opportunity to recreate in and live in harmony with the surrounding natural environment.

managed campgrounds in the Canyon. A new RV Campground opened in West Glacier in 2019 is owned and operated by Pursuit. Trailheads are located all throughout the community and most are easily accessible via local roads or the Glacier Gateway Trail.

FOREST CONDITIONS, WILDFIRE AND THE COMMUNITY[8]

West Glacier is a community surrounded by forest, so forest fire events are inevitable and should be expected to happen. In looking critically at the forested backgrounds of pictures taken of the West Glacier area through time, forestry experts estimate that there is more mature forest (biomass) now than ever before. Some historical photos show the effects of the 1929 Half Moon Fire and what the area forest was like prior to the 1929 fire. It had fewer large trees and much more of a mosaic depicting more frequent less severe fire events. An average acre of forest in the area grows from 1 to 2 tons of biomass / year and the average decomposition is less than ½ ton / year. It keeps accumulating until it burns or is treated manually.

In accessible private and public lands allocated for periodic mechanical treatments, there are many options to reduce wildfire risk around homes, infrastructure, and valuable community assets by reducing forest fuels. Today's forestry equipment can produce much more acceptable treatment results for landowners than the old logging machinery of years past. The now lodgepole forested area between the GNP entrance gate and Lake McDonald was essentially a total clear-cut following the 1929 Half Moon Fire, salvage logging and then the CCC's effort to fell all the remaining standing dead trees and pile burned them. The amount of time between fires is an important consideration – the longer interval, the more fuel available and the greater the potential for more fire intensity and severit . The history of wildfire movement in the area indicates that there is more "risk" of fire coming from the west and south rather than from the east or north and the community should plan for this. There are also some "good" areas within the community for "sheltering in place" which should be discussed along with evacuation. There were areas identified within the town of Paradise, CA where residents would have lived had they known to shelter there- instead, they died trying to evacuate.

The topography of the mountains and valleys surrounding the West Glacier community increases the potential for severe fire behavior. A fundamental principle in being firewise and preparing correctly for wildfire is that we need to reduce the fuels and prepare buildings and infrastructure for expected wildfire intensity. The lodgepole pine forest in much of the area is of a mature age and is

8 This summary assessment was provided courtesy of Rick Trembath, Flathead Forestry and Fire Consulting 11/8/2020.

increasingly susceptible to Mountain Pine Beetle mortality. Once dead, it will not stand long and when it's on the ground, will increase severe fire risk. The 1929 half moon fire provides the basis for area fire behavior prediction. It made runs of many miles in one burning period – from near Lake Five to Nyack in about 12 hours. No one should underestimate potential fire behavio .

Wildfire risk preparation is best done for the fire that develops locally in minutes or hours during a wind event, rather than a fire like the 2003 Roberts where the community had several days to prepare. Communities also need to prepare their infrastructure assets to withstand fire; like cell towers, railroad assets, electrical substations, water towers, pump houses, wooden bridges, community buildings, etc.

There should also be some discussion regarding the "Management" of surrounding public land forests not accessible or available for mechanical treatment – namely Glacier National Park and Flathead Forest. Whenever natural fire ignitions from lightning are put out, we are deferring the area that would have burned to a later burn where there will be more fuel loading the next time. Through successful aggressive fire suppression, we are managing the forest for infrequent higher intensity burns later on. When and where to put out fires versus allowing them to burn and the use of prescribed fire is a very complex issue, but it needs to be a part of the community discussion regarding wildfire risk

West Glacier Vis

Previous and Relevant Plans and Efforts

Referenced plans (with hyperlinks when available) include:

Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS)
https://d339kx0h3ogahu.cloudfront.net/Live/Projects/westglacier/files/230059 CALURS.pdf?637145393416530000

As an unincorporated community, West Glacier is without local municipal governance but rather by the county with a Citizen Advisory Committee appointed by local Commissioners who work with land use issues in the neighborhood guided by the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS). This plan is based on decades of citizen planning efforts by residents with great foresight starting in the 70s, and is styled specifically for this vulnerable spot in the gateway. The Canyon Plan, in place since 1994, has been a strong foundation for West Glacier even as times have changed. The committee works with the community to make changes in the form of amendments and periodic citizen review panels.

The Canyon Plan
(Neighborhood Plan Amendment to Flathead County Master Plan)
https://d339kx0h3ogahu.cloudfront.net/Live/Projects/westglacier/files/229888 CANYONPLAN.pdf?637123906454370000

2020-2024 Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
https://files.cfc.umt.edu/humandimensionslab/SCORP_2020-2024.pd

3 Forks of the Flathead Wild & Scenic River Comprehensive River Man- agement Plan
https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/flathead/home/?cid=fseprd573051&width=ful

Outstanding Remarkable Values Assessment of the Flathead River System (2023)
https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd570451.pdf

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) 2020 For Flathead County
https://flathead.mt.gov/fireservice/documents/Community_Wildfire_Protecti Plan_2020_v3_July_9_final.pd

Firesafe Flathead
www.firesafeflathead.c

Fire Adapted Community Learning Network
https://fireadaptednetwork.org

Fire Adapted Montana https://www.fireadaptedmontana.org

Summer CCC camp at Apgar, Lake McDonald in background, 1933–1934. Glacier National Park had a peak CCC enrollment of one thousand five hundred men, and eight camps were established to house them. Apgar, Belton, and McDonald Creek were the main camps on the park's west side. (Photo courtesy Montana Historical Society.)

2018 Flathead County Trails Plan
https://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning/documents/8.31.18FC
railsPlan- 2018Draft.pdf

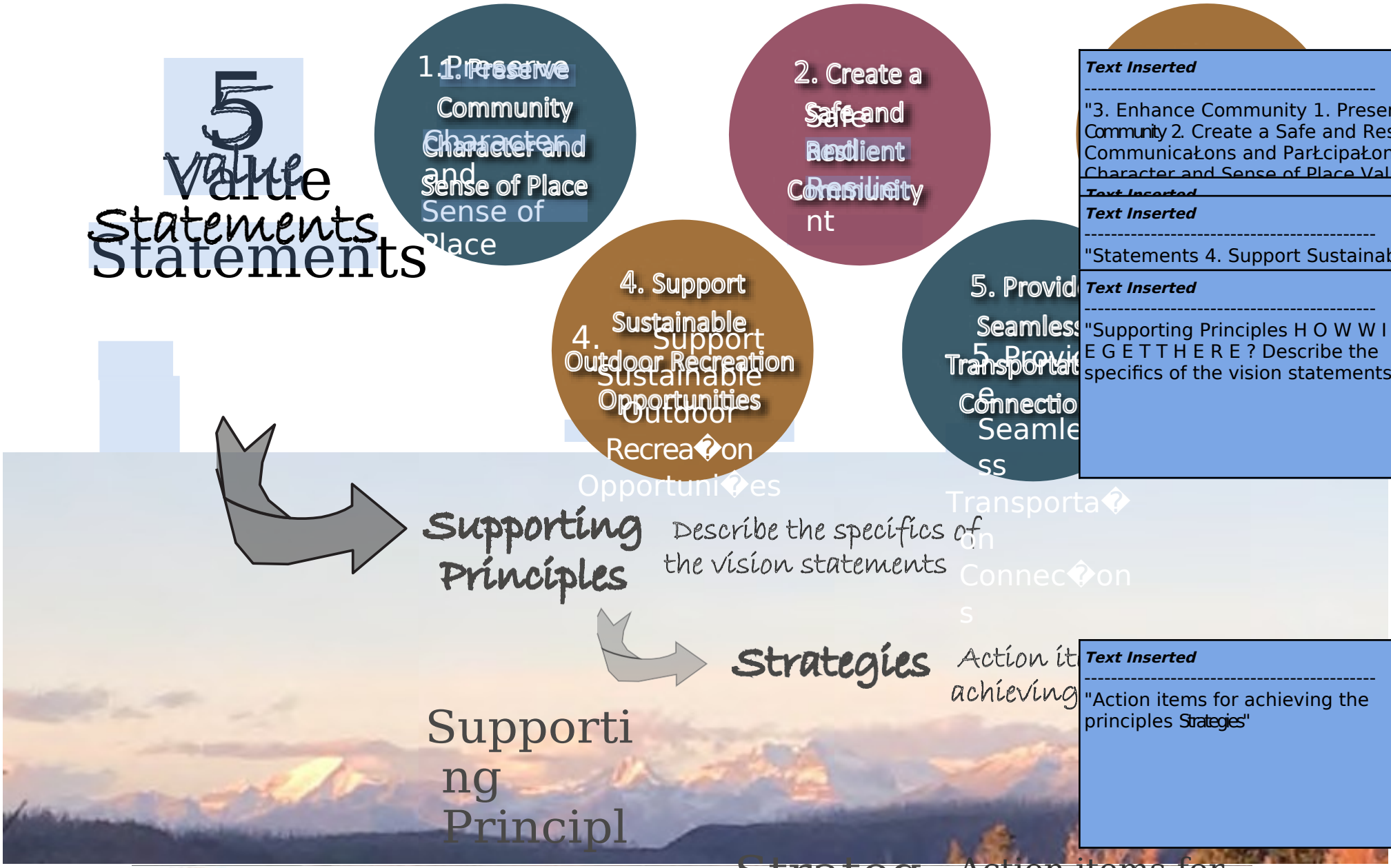
USFWS/ Headwaters Economics Socioeconomic Profile for Flathead County (Jan 2020)
https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/usfws-
indicators/

The draft Montana Forest Action Plan
https://www.montanaforestactionplan.org/datasets/b84ae968722
04f2dbad- a1b5a065955fe

The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council (MFAAC) has worked collaboratively to draft long-term, landscape recommendations to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk, while protecting our natural resources. The MFAAC welcomes the input of Montanans as they work together to protect their communities. The Montana Forest Action Plan is an important step in working with partners and neighbors across the state to get more work done on the ground. The public release of the draft Montana Forest Action Plan shows the commitment to cross- boundary work that both the DNRC and partners are moving forward with.

VISION:

West Glacier envisions their community as a place where recreation, healthy lifestyles and sustainable development converge to provide a high quality of life, while retaining unique historic character, habitat and abundant natural scenic beauty.



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"Action items for achieving the principles Strategies"

Preserve West Glacier community character & sense of place
FREDA'S BAR
WEST GLACIER CAFE

Goal #1: Preserve West Glacier Community Character and Sense of Place

PRINCIPLES

West Glacier's unique setting is defined by the community s ongoing value for:

- Celebrating and sharing the natural beauty of the resources they live among.
- Preserving the concept that West Glacier's natural landscape extends to Glacier NP and Flathead NF boundaries which preserves the movement of wildlife, plants, hydrology and other natural systems through the area.
- Preserving a sense of discovery, authenticity and wildness that can coexist here within this unique human community.
- Celebrating its historical context and preservation for period architecture which harkens back to the time of the park's designation. Preserving the existing "parkitecture" as standards and building style that matches the period of when the park was created.
- Retaining business development within the hamlet's designated Middle Canyon Land Use commercial zone that is scaled and appropriate with the size of the community.
- Guiding sustainable business development that provides opportunities and support mechanisms for business growth for both small and big business alike. Support a business landscape that allows desired business conditions we want to maintain with the ability for the range of diverse players to adapt and weather uncertain economic times.
- A community with a small base of year-round residents with limited infrastructure supportive of a rural mountain town.
- A welcoming and friendly attitude towards all visitors but desires that visitors come with an awareness and respect for the resource that they have had a role in stewarding over the generations.

Action Area Priorities

1. Preserve the authenticity of rural montana and its value for public land stewardship
2. Maintain a minimal level of amenities and development that feels appropriate but balanced with visitor-based needs
3. Maintain the historic feel of a unique, small-town pedestrian-friendly community by identifying placemaking priorities
4. Guide sustainable and appropriate business development

ACTION AREA 1: PRESERVE THE AUTHENTICITY OF RURAL MONTANA AND ITS VALUE FOR PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP

Maintain West Glacier's authentic, unpretentious community anchored within the hamlet's deep spirit of connection to nature and history. A community that wants to preserve a particular place in time that remains remarkable for both residents and visitors alike.

1. Ensure that the built environment continues to be integrated and scaled appropriately with mountain and recreational amenities (e.g. connections to trails, integration with the Flathead River, bike lanes and paths, etc.).
2. Define and enhance the community gateways that speak to the experience and values of West Glacier.
3. Strengthen and maintain the sense of connection between the Park and the Sun Corridor through town.
4. Educate visitors and residents about the history of the area and larger region.
5. Ensure the identity of the hamlet is reflected in local policies and codes such as through Design Guidelines, CALURS ordinance amendments and an updated Canyon Neighborhood Plan.

ACTION AREA 2: MAINTAIN A LEVEL OF AMENITIES AND DEVELOPMENT THAT FEELS APPROPRIATE BUT BALANCED WITH VISITOR-BASED NEEDS

Maintain a community that desires limits on development and strives for commercial uses that feel compatible with the rural nature of their community.

1. Continue to create an authentic Main Street as a collection of outdoor gathering spaces and "people" places that celebrate West Glacier
2. Study, design, and implement a new street layout to help create an accessible, welcoming, and safe West Glacier Main Street.
3. Work with businesses to provide recreational and cultural amenities that benefit both residents and guests alike
4. Continue to provide support services to small existing and new local businesses as they adapt to growth and change.
5. Work with landowners to encourage land uses that support the community character principles.
6. Support quality and compatible design and encourage unique and high- quality building construction and energy-efficien .

RIGHT: Colors selected from the natural environment and historic architectural us
can provide consistency and guidance for new and renovated landscapes.

ACTION AREA 3: MAINTAIN THE HISTORIC FEEL OF A UNIQUE, SMALL-TOWN PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY BY IDENTIFYING PLACEMAKING PRIORITIES

- A comfortable, safe, and aesthetically pleasing environment that is walkable and bikeable.
- By promoting outdoor focused design details and seamless integration between the built environment and the natural environment we can continue to enhance this connection.
- A unique nature-based atmosphere as backdrop for gathering spaces that foster ideas of community, creativity, entrepreneurship and a fun, simple life.

In addition to its unparalleled nature-based setting, West Glacier also has a variety of public and private gathering spaces. These spaces allow for community gatherings and special events that bring people together.

The following places have been customary gathering places for the community over the years:

1. Montana House Kintla Car- private, events,
2. Community Building and Conference Training Hall in GNP Headquarters.
3. WG Firehall - meetings.
4. WG Elementary School - meetings & events.
5. WG Seasonal Farmer's Market - o utdoor events.
6. WG Seasonal Glacier Raft Outdoor Center and other raft companies.

companies with conference space

7. Coram Stonefly events
Inn - privat

Text Replaced

Text Replaced

[Old]: "meetings)" [New]: "meetings."

8. Coram Glacier Grill - private, breakfast and lunch casual place now as it switched hands a few years ago.
9. WG Seasonal Belton Restaurant and Highland Café - private, small meetings.
10. WG Post Office - public, lots of informal, spontaneous
11. Coram Dew Drop Inn - private, at least one Fireman's fundraiser was held here in the
12. West Glacier Frita's Bar – private, use to be a locals place to socialize though frequented more by visitors to stop and have a drink after a day in the
13. Highland Cafe

PLACEMAKING PRIORITIES:

1. Utilize CALURS Neighborhood Plan and regulations to address sustainability and maintain authentic "sense of place" through text amendments.
2. Improve public understanding of the CALURS process and representation by the community.
3. Through amendments, update the 1994 Canyon Plan, a neighborhood plan that focuses on the specific needs of West Glacier and adjacent communities.
4. Explore/utilize educational and interpretive strategies to expand awareness of the historical value and events that created the place (including West Glacier and surrounding communities) and increase awareness of proximity to the surrounding public and tribal lands.
5. Connect with the Salish/Kootenai & Blackfeet on West Glacier planning recommendations. Ask "How can tribal history be incorporated into the sense of place"?
6. Design guidelines are sets of recommendations on how to apply design principles to provide a positive user experience. Develop a design palette to guide landscape and construction projects to guide place-making consistency and aesthetics. Develop a suggested plant list supporting the planting of native and water-sensitive species.
7. Implement Entryway Beautification Project at the intersection of BNSF Overpass and Hwy 2. Consider entryway improvements that communicate West Glacier's identity, history, values and presence.
8. Name West Glacier's "Main St" which is technically GTSR
9. Allow for publicly accessible spaces in both design and policy, meeting the goal of being an inviting community.
10. Promote the creation of small-scale, low cost neighborhood resources that foster community (e.g. Little Free Libraries).
11. Continue to support community gatherings and events that bring people together.
12. Include design details, interpretiv
references local history and fea
"Main Street" streetscape enhanc

past

Text Replaced

[Old]: "(private," [New]: "-private,"

Text Replaced

[Old]: "(private, events, meetings)"
[New]: "-private, events, meetings."

13. Create a conceptual illustrated plan to articulate the hamlet's space uses
and connectivity.

ACTION AREA 4: GUIDE SUSTAINABLE AND APPROPRIATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Create an informal "business pledge" that all businesses can come together around, encouraging support, collaboration and value for preserving the setting.
2. Foster and support constructive relationships and discussions between residents and businesses
3. Provide resources for equitable business planning under "difficul or precarious" economic environments including small business loans, networking with Chambers of commerce, Flathead Economic Development Agency, USDA Rural Community Aid.
4. Explore revitalization of the Middle Canyon Business Group. Efforts to coordinate would be advantageous, including park businesses. Businesses could benefit from working together towards a common goal
5. Utilize communications network developed from this process to continue coordination.
6. Continue to evolve CALURS to address community and business needs through text amendments. MCLUAC Board has five representatives and is a Citizen Review Panel whose role is to review and recommend actions on all West Glacier related applications having to do with proposed land use changes pending in the Flathead County Planning and Zoning Offic (FCPZ). This is an Advisory role for Flathead County.
7. Encourage responsible but flexible housing for the local workforce within commercial developments. Fully integrate workforce housing- through a CALURS ordinance.
8. Explore opportunities to grow higher education programs at UMT or regional trade schools to expand support for communities through sustainable recreation and sustainable tourism planning.
9. Investigate opportunities and coordinate projects with other local communities and Flathead County on affordable/attainable housing
10. Promote leadership development and encourage diversity of culture and thought in county planning processes.
11. The community should protect wildlife, habitat, connectivity corridors, and scenic vistas. When development occurs it should be sized, located, and designed to avoid or limit impacts to wildlife and the natural environment.

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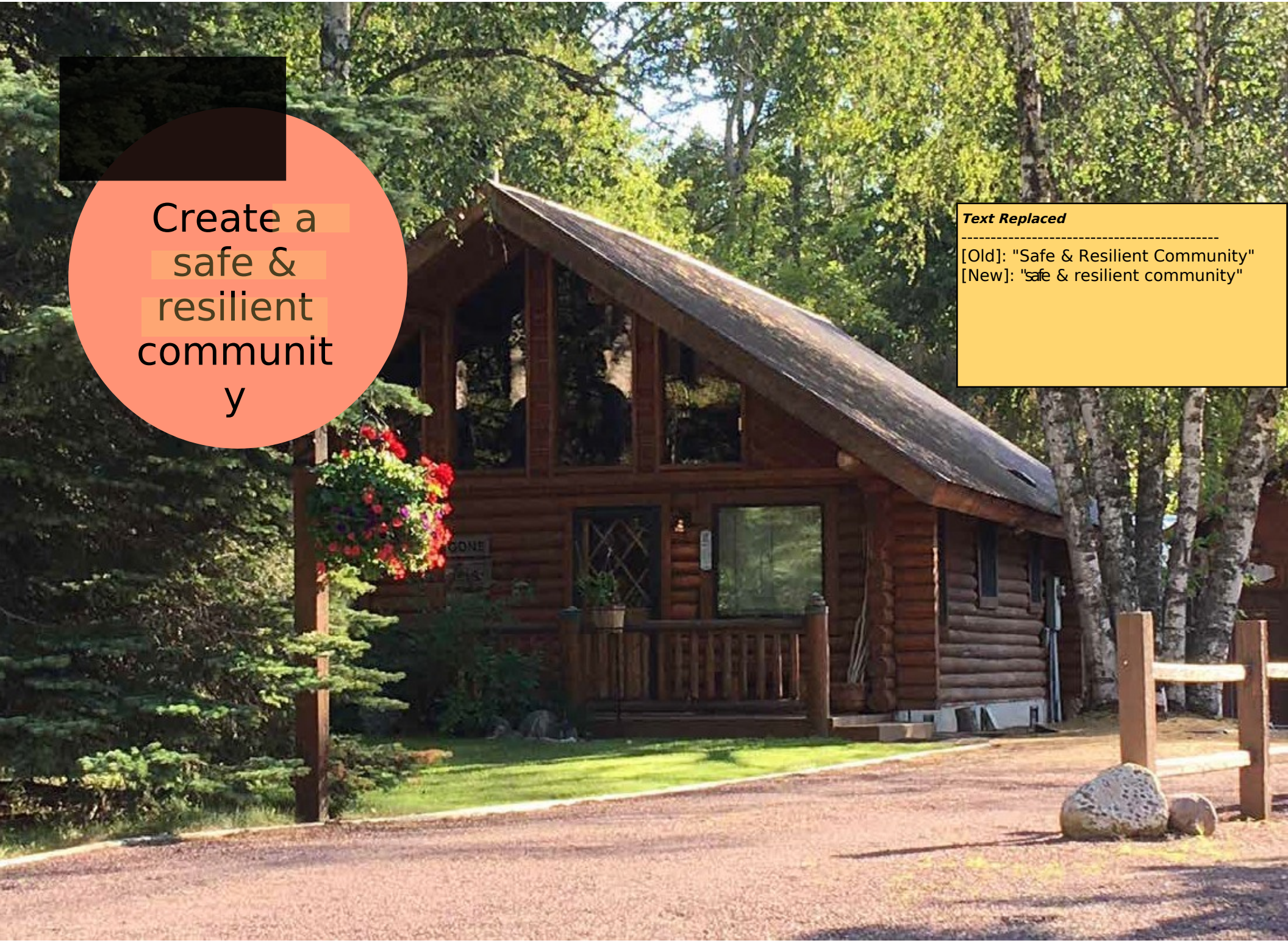
PURSUIT'S COMMITMENT TO THE HISTORIC RURAL SENSE OF PLACE

West Glacier is unique in that businesses that operate in this area are also stewards of the natural resources as well as of the historic character of the place. Pursuit is one of these businesses that have embedded values for authentic places and experiences into their mission. Pursuit is both a business and an advocate in this way, but articulates their "responsibilities to manage our impact on the environment, foster respect for people and champion our communities" through their marketing. This kind of pledge is important to many "green" travelers and visitors who want to experience genuine places that have timeless character. For others, the pledge creates an awareness of the efforts made to preserve that natural setting and community character.
For more information on Pursuit's "Promise to Place" see:
https://www.pursuitcollection.com/Website/media/pursuit/Documents/Sustainability/Pursuit-Promise-to-Place-2018-



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[Old]: "Safe & Resilient Community"
[New]: "safe & resilient community"

Goal #2: Create a Safe and Resilient Community

Principles:

- A safe and resilient community integrates a culture of emergency preparedness, public health, flood and wildfire awareness into the activities and communications of residents, businesses and visitors. Such a community also integrates climate resiliency and sustainability into the community's practices and strategies for a strong and vibrant future.

- West Glacier aspires to become a regional leader among Montana mountain towns in responsibly interacting with and utilizing its surrounding natural resources. Appreciation and protection of this wild natural environment means implementing policies that guide the actions of residents, businesses and visitors so that people, the forest and wildlife are protected.

- The community envisions a future where its residents operate in ways that are good for both people and the planet now and for the future. In order to provide the quality of life that residents and visitors expect and desire, it is crucial that the community create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that allow us to meet the social, economic and environmental needs now and in the future.

Community Resiliency Action Area Priorities:

1. Communications for Community Readiness
2. Establish West Glacier/Middle Canyon Area as a Fire-Adapted Community
3. Support Forest Health and Conservation through Land Use Planning
4. Create a climate action plan by pursuing collaboration with other communities

ACTION AREA 1: Communications for Community Readiness

Create, produce and distribute a communications plan for community and environment safety awareness, to include wildfire safety practices, emergency preparedness, leave no trace and public health.

1. Develop specific interagency PSA on wildfire safety for residents, businesses and visitors (Flathead County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) 2020 wildfire recommendations.) Work with local businesses, residents and partners to distribute and promote common wildfire- afe messaging to visitors.
2. Incorporate wildfire/floo preparedness communication and procedures into a short-term rental county newsletter provided to all new permit holders.

3. Work with Flathead National Forest Hungry Horse Ranger District and Montana DNRC to develop, promote and implement a Community-Based Smokey Bear Sign to promote fire awareness to visitors of communities that reside in areas with wildfire risk.
4. Partner with DNRC and Climate Action Plan Committee on annual Wildfire Preparedness Workshops. Include information on wildfire preparedness in education and outreach materials. Work with DNRC to promote residential fire audits
5. Work with the Crown of the Continent Roundtable on community-oriented large landscape conservation efforts. For example, develop a "Crown of the Continent Conservation Community" Tourism rating system and become the model or pilot "gold star community".
6. Expand wildfi e communications and education to youth, for example, through Glacier Institute. Inquire what is required for certified instruction on these topics, if any.

ACTION AREA 2: Establish the Glacier Park Area as a Fire- Adapted Community.

Fire-adapted communities are defined by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group as "A human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire." More fully, fire adapted communities are knowledgeable, engaged communities where actions of residents and agencies in relation to infrastructure, buildings, landscaping and the surrounding ecosystem lessen the need for extensive protection actions and enable the communities to safely accept fire as part of the surrounding landscape."[1]
Also see the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network: https://fireadaptednetwork.org

1. Promote and implement the recently updated Flathead County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) 2020 and coordinate work with Firesafe Flathead, the Fire Adapted Community Learning Network and Fire Adapted Montana.
   - https://flathead.mt.gov/fireservice/documents/Community_Wildfire_Protection_Plan_2020_v3_July_9_final.pd
   - www.firesafeflathead.c
   - https://fireadaptednetwork.org
   - https://www.fireadaptedmontana.org

2. Implement a community wildfire assessment (note: add an example from DNRC to Appendix). See the Fire Adapted Communities Self-Assessment Tool (FAC SAT) here: https://fireadaptednetwork.org/resources/fac assessment-tool/

1 https://fireadapted.org/

3. Implement an annual community emergency preparedness day where the community helps each other with fuel reduction projects, firesafe best practices and evacuation procedures.

4. Work with Montana DNRC to establish West Glacier's priority level in the Montana Forest Action Plan (parts of Flathead County are identified but West Glacier shows no data). Pursue discussion with DNRC about Forest Action Plan – where does West Glacier fit and why is it currently not included.

The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council was asked to use their expertise and experience to identify Priority Areas for Focused Attention in need of active landscape-scale forest restoration and management that address wildland fire risk and forest health issues across Montana's forests. Landscapes across Montana that have high wildfire risk to communities and infrastructure, as well as areas with significant forest health concerns, were identified using a data-driven GIS analysis. These areas are of the highest priority for implementing landscape scale cross-boundary forest restoration and management. https://www.montanaforestactionplan.org/pages/priority-areas

ACTION AREA 3: Support Forest Health and Conservation through Land Use Planning

Conversion of natural areas and farmland to developed property may result in increased habitat fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, disruption of natural landscape processes, degradation of water resources, increased flooding, nonpoint- source pollution, and growing public and private costs for servicing dispersed development.

Conservation

1. Support community forest biodiversity and control the invasion and spread of undesirable non-native plants, animals, and insects.
2. Support trail routes to minimize ecological impacts while enhancing access and recreation.
3. Protect the integrity of riparian zones, wildlife habitat and movement corridors through use of conservation easements and other land protection measures. Refer to the USDA/FS Riparian Buffer Design Guidelines for determining suitable land uses and setbacks for riparian zones: https://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr203.pdf
4. Foster alliances and partnerships with organizations that are working toward a healthy and thriving environment.
5. Support education and understanding of public lands through appropriate recreational activities, formal and non-formal education, and interpretive programs through local businesses and organizations.
6. Protect significant viewsheds to maintain our connection with the natural and cultural environment.
7. Become a Dark Sky Community.
8. Update landscape design guidelines to clearly address any conflicts with the natural environment and wildlife. Look at the North Fork Improvement Association document for best practices on living with wildlife.

Waste and Pollution

1. Identify and develop viable, sustainable strategies designed to divert an increasing portion of the community's waste stream from landfills with the eventual goal of being a zero waste community.
2. Explore options for recycling and waste reduction strategies. Identify who is doing recycle/reuse advocacy & campaigns in the Flathead Valley and determine ways to collaborate.
3. Collaborate with other communities and organizations to develop local communications and bear-proof infrastructure that will accommodate recyclables, organics, and hazardous waste disposal.
4. Commit to acting as a resource in assisting citizens and visitors to practice appropriate waste disposal.

Montana House Leadership in Community Wildfire Preparedness: Programming and Public Meetings

The iconic Montana House in Apgar, an authentic Montana artisan gift shop, has been an important community center since 1960 - a year of multiple wildfires near the est Glacier area. Since the 1967 Glacier Park wildfire and the 2003 mega wildfire in Glacier National Park (GNP) wildfire has become an annual reality for the community creating a growing need for such a cente . The Montana House stepped up to meet that need. Responding to the changing climate and increasing vulnerabilities of the community, owner Monica Jungster provided the Montana House Kintla Event and Meeting Room and spurred into action. They have proactively collaborated with multiple agencies and experts including GNP, Flathead National Forest, Flathead County Emergency Services and Department of Natural Resources and Conservation –initiating the devel- opment of community specific wildfire awareness programs, provide wildfire resources and foster preparedness through educational meeting planning and affecting policy countywide. M Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has stated the

5. Regarding potential hazardous railway spills, work with BNSF to address needs for additional egress for emergencies as well as concerns related to oil/hazardous material spill response.
6. Include Flathead Basin Commission (FBC) recommendations and pursue resources to support more extensive water quality monitoring by working with FBC, the Conservation District, and technical community and management agencies.
7. Address environmental health through ordinances that address age and replacement schedule of septic infrastructure. For ex. Lewis & Clark County requires inspections of septic in land transfers.
8. Create a technical advisory group that monitors this water quality at non- point source. Engage Flathead Lake Biological Station, at Yellow Bay, for partnering in this effort

ACTION AREA 4: Pursue collaboration with other communities to create a climate action plan

Based on recommendations from comparable climate adaptation plans the following may be considerations for the West Glacier and Middle Canyon area:

Sustainable Community Infrastructure

Reduce our environmental footprint by conserving energy and water, reducing waste, increasing recycling, and addressing resilience

1. Support comprehensive sustainability planning as part of the 2021 Flathead County Growth Plan.
2. Maximize cost savings by conserving water and by reducing capacity demands on the wastewater treatment plant.
3. Support local businesses, increase local production of food, and reduce waste.
4. Support more public transit, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly options.

Community Health

1. Foster equitable access to healthcare facilities and services.
2. Provide access to healthy food by promoting local food supply through farmers' markets and connections to local farming communities.
3. Provide information on available health resources through communications outlets.

Energy

1. Consider incentives to encourage new construction to substantially exceed minimum code requirements for energy efficienc and renewable energy use.
2. Strengthen strategic partnerships between the community and County entities to establish learning networks for people on how to build sustainable systems, including:
   - Install rain sensors to reduce irrigation waste
   - Convert lawns to native plants
   - Develop educational programs
   - Flathead Basin Commission l
     monitoring of storm water
     creation of rainwater garde
     filtration
   - Investigate Audubon certificat

Text Replaced

[Old]: "climate change." [New]: "resiliency."

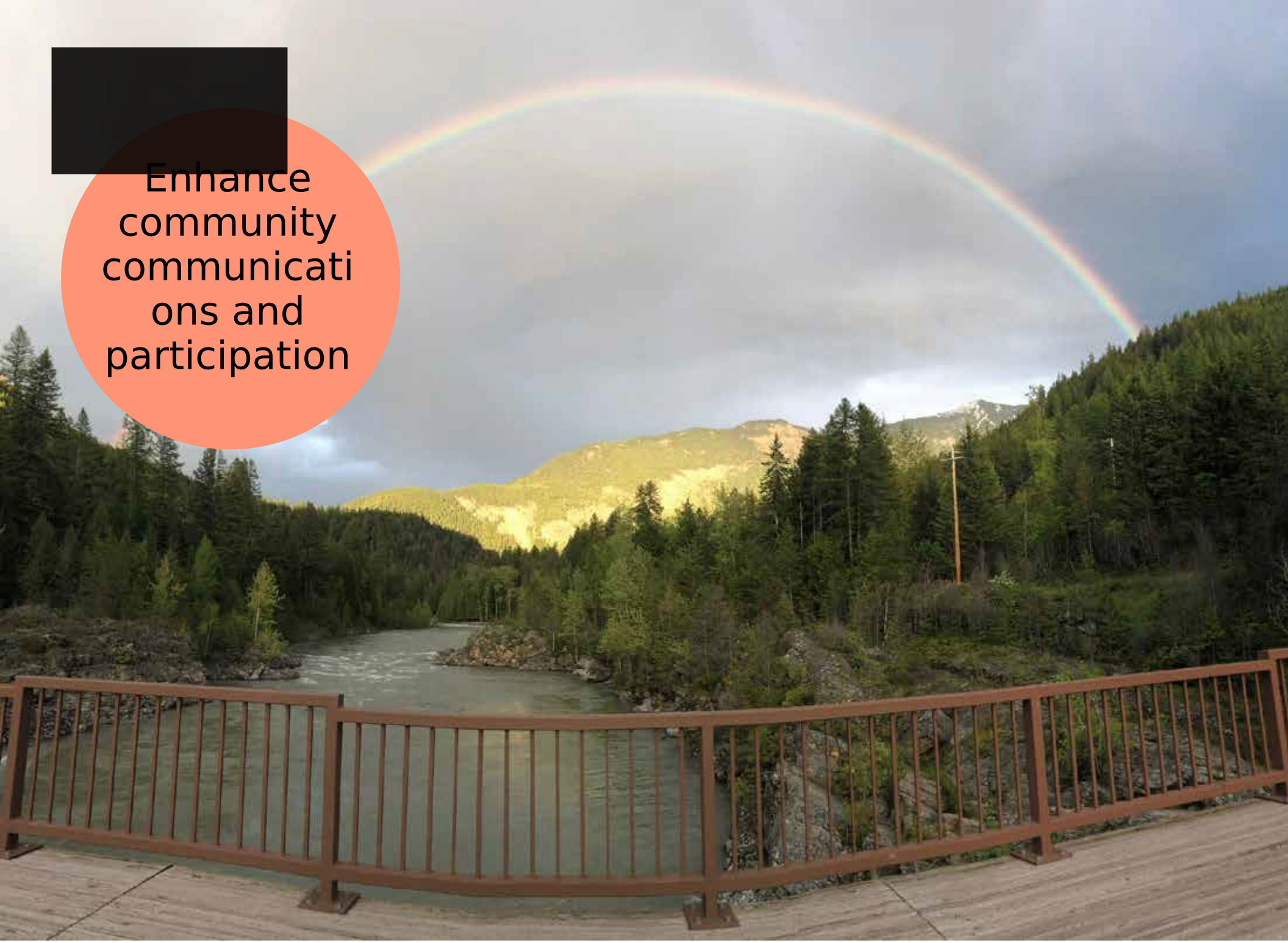
For region-specific resiliency planning, refer to the following tools and Montana climate planning guidance and efforts to identify community-supported strategies for adaptation:

- **Climate Adaptation Knowledge Ex-change (CAKE)**: Incorporate community climate adaptation https://www.cakex.org/tutorials
- **Climate Smart Glacier Country**: https://climatesmartglaciercountry.org/
- **2020 Climate Ready Missoula**: Building Resiliency in Missoula County https://www.adaptationclearinghouse.org/resources/climate-ready- missoula-building-resiliency-in-missoula-county.html
- **2018 City of Whitefish, MT Climate Action Plan** https://www.

adaptationclearinghouse.org/resources/city-of-whitefish-montana-climate action-plan.html

- **2016 Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation Climate Change Strategic Plan** https://www.adaptationclearinghouse.org/resources/confederated-salish-and-kootenai- tribes-of-the-flathead-reservation-climate-change-strategic-plan.htm

- **2007 Montana Climate Action Plan** (the state has no current climate adaptation plan) https://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Energy/ClimateChange/Documents/FinalReportChapters.pdf


Enhance community communicati ons and participation

Goal #3: Enhanc community communications participati

Principles:

Community members are always diverse in the ways that they want to receive information. Differences in communication preferences make it difficul to rely on any one form to reach the broader group. This planning process highlighted the communication sources that were already strong but also identified some communication needs that should be addressed as action items.

Provide a range of communication outlets for West Glacier to participate and collaborate in community planning and discussions about how they can work together to support their vision goals. During public outreach, when the community voiced communication preferences, e-newsletters and website clearinghouses were ranked the two most desired formats for acquiring community information.

Communications Action Area Priorities:

1. Establish a community and business-wide independent, non-biased E-newsletter
2. Create a website clearinghouse
3. Continue local and regional newspaper community updates
4. Continue public meetings and in-person community events
5. Maintain a diverse collaborative working group for Vision implemention
6. Establish an Outdoor Public Information Kiosk at the West Glacier Post Office or other Public Spac

ACTION AREA 1: Establi business-wide independ newsletter

Text Replaced

[Old]: "Community Communications and Participation" [New]: "community communications and participation"

- Pursue the creation of a non-bias community which distributes a va information. While the West Gla sizeable newsletter distribution range of information to the co viewed as non-biased which reduces trust in the communication outlet by some.
- Work on one master mailing list that everyone gets. Have a standardized format attachment that goes out to the community and every business gets in the habit of posting in their lobbies, kiosks, and visitor information centers so that the traveling public can get the message too. Link to the information on websites and maybe even the NPS RAD display.

ACTION AREA 2: Create a Website Clearinghouse

Website clearinghouses such as the County website is a favored platform when the community desires information but doesn't want to have it forced upon them through mailings or email.

- Pursue the creation of a separate West Glacier, Middle Canyon or "Unincorporated Flathead Communities" sub-page of the County website where a variety of community information can be posted.

ACTION AREA 3: Continue Local and Regional Newspaper Community Updates

Newspaper outlets are a long-standing source of information for residents and businesses in the Flathead Valley. Some examples include the Flathead Beacon, Hungry Horse News, the Missoulian and the Montana Free Press. These outlets reach a wide audience and can advertise for events and other public outreach

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West Glacier Vision Collaborative Working Group

The planning and coordination of this project required the support and resources of a diverse team of individuals. This team brought validity and attention to the need for this project and the values that tied them personally and organizationally to the collaborative effort. The team of eight was made up of federal agencies, small and large businesses, conservation advocates, County planning, and local community organizers. As part of the planning process, this working group helped advise on public engagement strategy, identification of stakeholders and planning process. D - spite working on this plan through the Covid 19 Pandemic, the group maintained energy to work on the project and re-affirmed the value and nee for a collaborative working group to continue into the future.

activities. Unlike e-newsletters and websites, the newspaper distributions report what is provided them for particular events but may not be comprehensive in representing all of the resources or activities going on in any one community.

ACTION AREA 4: Continue Public Meetings and In-Person Community Events

Public meetings are often the most desired way to provide an open forum for feedback and appeal to the social side of community planning and debate over issues. One of the downsides of public meetings is that evening meetings can challenge residents who work service-based jobs, those families with young children or disabled members of the community. In the pre-Covid era, little was done to equalize the disparity that resulted from this though our experience with the pandemic has now motivated more forms of communications to accommodate engagement through virtual forms as well. There is no doubt that public meetings and in-person community events remain a popular form of communications about community issues in West Glacier though they remain irregular, topical and spearheaded by a variety of residents and business owners. As a result, without a non-biased newsletter or website clearinghouse, events are advertised via personal email chains so the broader community may not receive these communications and be aware of how they may be able to engage with their community.

- Create a Facebook Page that allows residents and businesses to post information, ideas and events in real-time. This could also foster the growing interest in work groups that could focus on the different goals and actions identified in this plan

ACTION AREA 5: Maintain a diverse collaborative working group for Vision implementation

The planning and coordination of this project required the support and resources of a diverse team of individuals. This team brought validity and attention to the need for this project and the values that tied them personally and organizationally to the collaborative effort. The team of eight was made up of federal agencies, small and large businesses, conservation advocates, County planning, and local community organizers. There was agreement as the year-long community process came to a close that the multi-disciplinary group was advantageous and that a similar group should continue. As a result, the following recommendation has been made for moving forward:

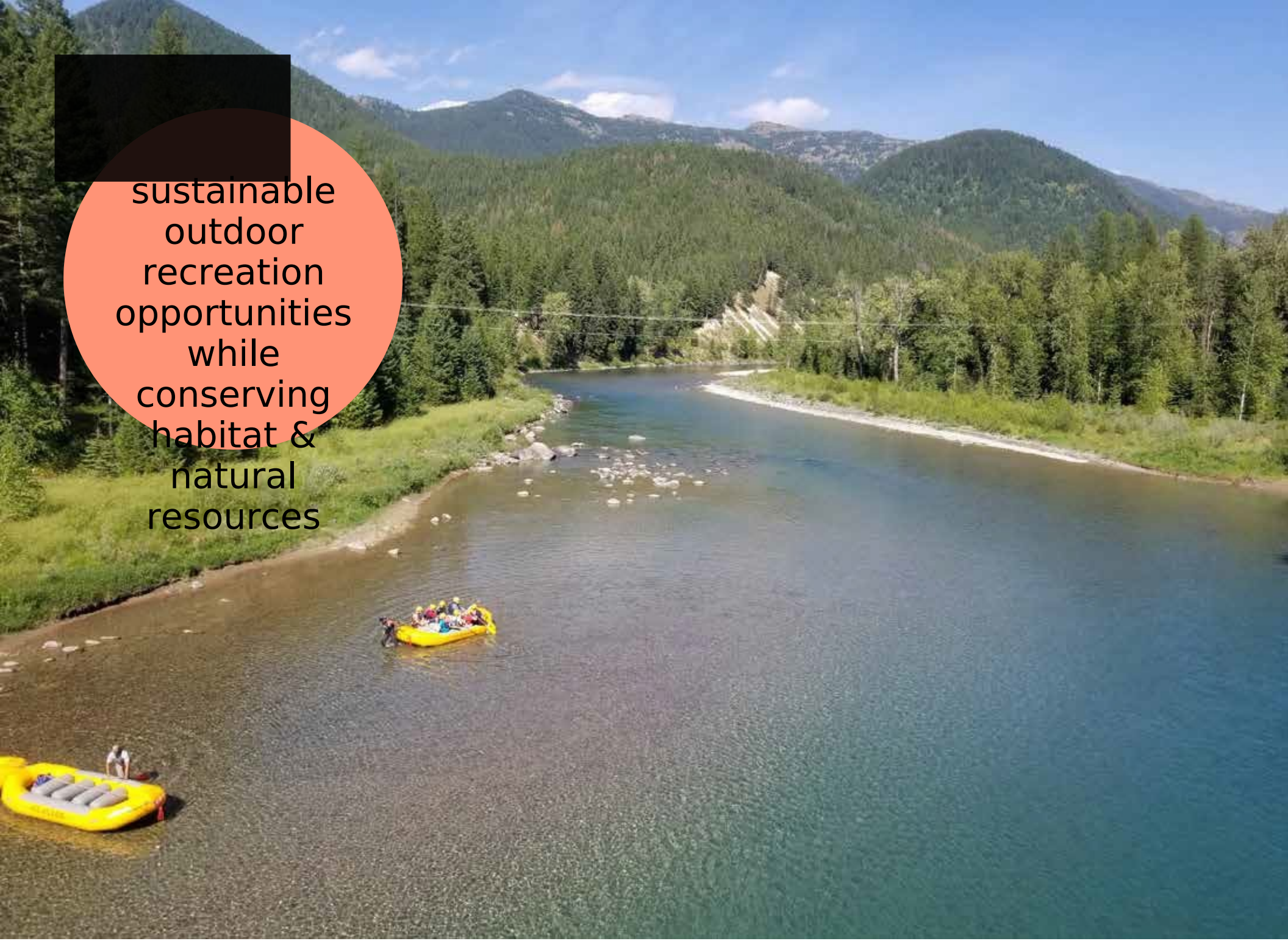
- Develop a new West Glacier Vision Collaborative Working Group that prioritizes and focuses work on the actions identified in this plan. This group should include the existing participants but should be expanded to include more people who represent a broader interest in the community of both the residents and businesses. Efforts should be made to engage diverse audiences and a broad range of generations, including new residents.
- One aspect of this Vision Plan affirm the idea that West Glacier can not achieve this alone- that as visitation and population in the County grows, that there will likely be a growing desire to preserve the community and setting dear to them. This West Glacier Vision Group (WGVG) should make efforts to be inclusive of other communities in thinking about how to communicate and work together to achieve common goals.

ACTION AREA 6: Establish an Outdoor Public Information Kiosk at the West Glacier Post Office or other Public Space

- West Glacier is limited in the availability of public space to post information for the community and visitors, but the US Post Offic located along West Glacier's "Main Street" has performed this function over the years.
- An outdoor kiosk can be small scale, simply designed and integrated into the character of adjacent buildings while also becoming an informal gathering point for the community. Such a structure can provide historical and interpretive information for all as well as relevant community information. If this kiosk is pursued, posting and management guidelines will need to be established.

2020 Pandemic Public Service Announcement

The West Glacier Vision Planning Team developed a public service announcement (PSA) that was distributed in the community and mailed to both full-time and part-time residents. The PSA updated the residential and business community of project progress and activities and also provided guidance on best practices around Covid 19 health precautions as well as wildfire safety and short-term rentals. Other Covid 19 collaboration activities included Pursuit working with Glacier National Park, County Health and Kalispell Regional Hospital to set up a seasonal clinic in one of their buildings in West Glacier.


sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities while conserving habitat & natural resources

Goal #4: Support sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities while conserving wildlife habitat and natural resources that define this place.

Principles:

- A community that embraces its connections to the surrounding National Park and National Forest environment and all the opportunities and challenges that come with it.
- While the park offers world-class national park experiences and the national forest offers a more rugged range of outdoor opportunities, existing amenities should be evaluated for sustainability, resource and wildlife impacts and ability to meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- Public land stewardship and regional recreation planning requires the coordination and cooperation of a variety of partners, including tourism and outdoor recreation organizations who can be advocates for responsible recreation use.
- These goals align with the goals of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that are applicable to West Glacier.
- The Canyon Plan references the Middle Fork Geographic Unit in limiting activities to low-impact recreation in the Middle Canyon and prohibiting motorized vehicles (Section II-5). CALURS also designates and defines passive recreation use for the Middle Canyon and allows Minor Land Uses
  7.a.6 (Tourist equipment rentals, non-motorized).

Outdoor Recreation Priorities:

1. Trail and Path Connectivity
2. River Corridors and Accesses
3. Stewardship of Public Lands
4. Regional Recreation Opportunity Planning

ACTION AREA 1: Local and Regional Trail Connectivity

West Glacier is immersed in a setting for rich outdoor recreation experiences which means that the community is impacted by traffi congestion by visitors looking to move between river accesses to trailheads to camping areas to food/ beverage amenitiy areas. Pedestrian and bike connectivity around town can reduce traffic congestion and provide a more enjoyable experience to al

- Small rural towns such as West Glacier are delightful for their walkability: Flathead County has a trails masterplan that identifies desired trail improvements for the Glacier Park Area. In addition to new parking, camping, and social amenities in town, recommendations from the Flathead Wild and Scenic River Plan should inform pedestrian connectivity and wayfinding recommendations.
- Explore opportunities for improvements in West Glacier-based shared use path connections- look at the trails masterplan for existing recommendations and identify connections that require safety or design improvements.
- Provide a safe, accessible, dedicated bike lane and pedestrian path along West Glacier Main Street to avoid pedestrian/bike/vehicle conflicts and allow everyone convenient, easy access to amenities.
- Design roadways with hikers and cyclists in mind, with particular attention to posted speeds, width, and other pedestrian/cyclist awareness measures.
- Maintain trailhead and forest access points and easements within and through residential and commercial developments. This access can be as simple as signage and a hiker/biker/horse width easement.

In 2018, the Flathead County Trails Plan was updated. Public outreach and surveys performed as part of the process highlighted County residents' view of trails as a great investment because they improve community health, pro- vide opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors and alternative commuting options, and attract visitors to Flathead County. Specific needs expressed by community members included:

- A desire to see further expansion and better maintenance of existing trails.

Gateway to Glacier Trail

Gateway to Glacier Trail (G2GT) is a non-profit citizens' organization with a goal of building a safe non-motorized path from Columbia Falls to West Glacier, Montana. The citizen group came together in 2011 to advocate and raise funds for a non-motorized trail connecting to the existing Hungry Horse to Coram Trail. The group has received grants, including the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds and Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funds, successfully negotiated easements with Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, and negotiated with the Montana Department of Transportation regarding future reconstruction of Highway 2 through Badrock Canyon to include a non-motorized trail.

- A strong desire to connect Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls through paved bike paths.
- Need for safety education to inform bicyclists that they need to be aware of horses, if separating the trails is not possible. (Multiple-use etiquette signs)
- An online map of area bike trails. Trailforks is an app that anyone can use and contribute to.
- A need for better parking for horse trailers.
- Connect trails systems to each other with bike lanes and shared use paths.
- Add a shared use path around Flathead Lake.

The 2018 Flathead Trails Plan Survey results found the following primary activities on trails: (713 responded)

Walking 59% Hiking 65%
Biking 57% Running 28%
Horseback riding 17% Cross country skiing/Snowshoeing 40% Snowmobile 5% ATV 3%
Motorcycle 3% Do not use trails 2%

ACTION AREA 2: Flathead River Corridor and Access

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River flows through est Glacier, between Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest and is dually managed by the two agencies. In addition, the Flathead River is a Wild and Scenic River (WSR), under the Wild and Scenic River Act, “including the North Fork from the Canadian border to its confluence with the Middle Fork, the entire Middle Fork, and the South Fork from its headwaters to the Hungry Horse Reservoir.” The free-flowing characte , diverse and intact ecosystems, and remarkable values are what make the Flathead River unique and vital to protect and conserve for the viability of natural systems and the enjoyment of present and future genera- tions (Flathead Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, 1980).

This conservation-oriented community recognizes the role water plays in the natural environment, recreation and ability to live here in a responsible and sustainable way. As the Middle Fork of the Flathead flows through est Glacier it provides an unprecedented natural backdrop, a vital wildlife habitat, and a crucial resource to support our residents and guests. Rivers are a natural draw, attracting people, wildlife, businesses, and recreation. Additionally, everything that we do has an impact on downstream users.

This means promoting the need for policies that ensure a resilient and healthy ecosystem. The CALURS development standards should act as an extension of these policies and encourage water health, conservation and efficiency in ou built environment, adjacent development and planned uses.

Flathead River Wild & Scenic River Management Plan is underway. Information can be found here:
https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/flathead/home/?cid=fseprd573051&width=full

Current Flathead River Use (From 2018 Wild and Scenic River Use Report courtesy University of Montana College of Forestry and Conservation)
The river exists in the context of rapid social and environmental change. Both Glacier NP visitation and the population of the region surrounding the river are increasing at a rapid rate. More people could mean more river corridor users and increased use. Additionally, there are new types of users in the corridor. Crafts are becoming more affordable and lighter-weight and many recreationists do not need a guide to help them down the river. As a result, the Flathead River is experiencing more shore parties, dispersed camping, and extended seasons. This could affect peoples' perceptions of crowding and may explain increased impacts along shores.

As of the writing of this plan during the 2020 Covid19 pandemic, nationwide trends in boating and fishing are showing an increase by 10% [1]

River and Riparian Action Priorities:

1. Protect existing physical and visual access to waterways within and around the Town.
2. Maintain healthy stream flows for ecological, recreational, and scenic pu - poses.

1 Outdoor Recreation Caucus briefing: Recreation During COVID-19. October 21, 2020

3. Strengthen the Flathead River and its associated floodplai as a recreational and economic amenity while preserving the riparian habitat.
4. Protect and interpret the viability of natural wetlands and watercourses as a key component of our natural and built environments.
5. Maintain river buffers through the Canyon neighborhood plan and MCLUAC ordinances that limit the impacts of particular detrimental human uses. Utilize rain gardens and other stormwater capture strategies for treating road pollutants before reaching the river.
6. Incorporate comprehensive stormwater systems (where possible) that improve water quality and contribute to the ecological functioning of watersheds.
7. Restore or enhance degraded or disturbed waterways to improve ecological conditions, aesthetics, and recreation.
8. Extend trails and create additional linkages, as appropriate, to link to waterways.
9. Promote public safety and river health by creating regulatory ordinances to update failing septic systems.
10. Continue active participation in the Flathead River Wild and Scenic River Plan and explore opportunities to improve the West Glacier river access:
11. Engage community in developing parking lot, kiosk/information and access improvements with consideration that the access/parking is set within a residential setting.
12. Consider developing capacity limits for the West Glacier river access and parking lot to mitigate impacts to the environment and to residents. Potential river access parking expansion at the West Glacier River Bend Drive access could make existing congestion and overflow parking even worse in this residential area.

13. Work with University of Montana College of Forestry and Conservation and other agency and non-profit partners to develop more comprehensive user data and data monitoring for water quality. Evaluate the need for permitting of private boats in this reach due to impacts of increased use.
14. Consider how more parking increases traffi safety hazards on an already congested section of road from Hwy 2 to the River Bend Dr access. Evaluate the viability and impacts of developing down-river access sites to offset high river use in this residential setting.
15. Planning for wildlife: the community needs to decide if it is important to maintain or recover a high level of wildlife diversity by discussing objectives with the Hungry Horse Ranger District and NPS – habitats on all these lands are interrelated and affect one another. To achieve these goals, if privately owned land includes important wildlife habitat, a landowner may wish to consider some type of conservation easement to benefit wildlife and to maintain community values. These sites could be identified in the yearly workplanning process. The community and the planning board could then help willing and motivated landowners locate possible sources of financial compensation in lieu of development.

ACTION AREA 3: Stewardship of Public Lands

West Glacier is defined by the inspiration that its natural environment leaves on everyone who spends time in the area. It is defined by its wildlife bounding out of the woods; and, by the pure waters of the Flathead River as it flows through the area. As an outdoor community physically linked to a healthy and thriving natural and human environment, its residential and business community is protective of the environment they live and work amongst. They are a community that has a long history in the area and is observant of the changing conditions from year to year. As a result, they are advocates for the protections that public lands provide and also stewards who help educate and enforce that high value natural environment.

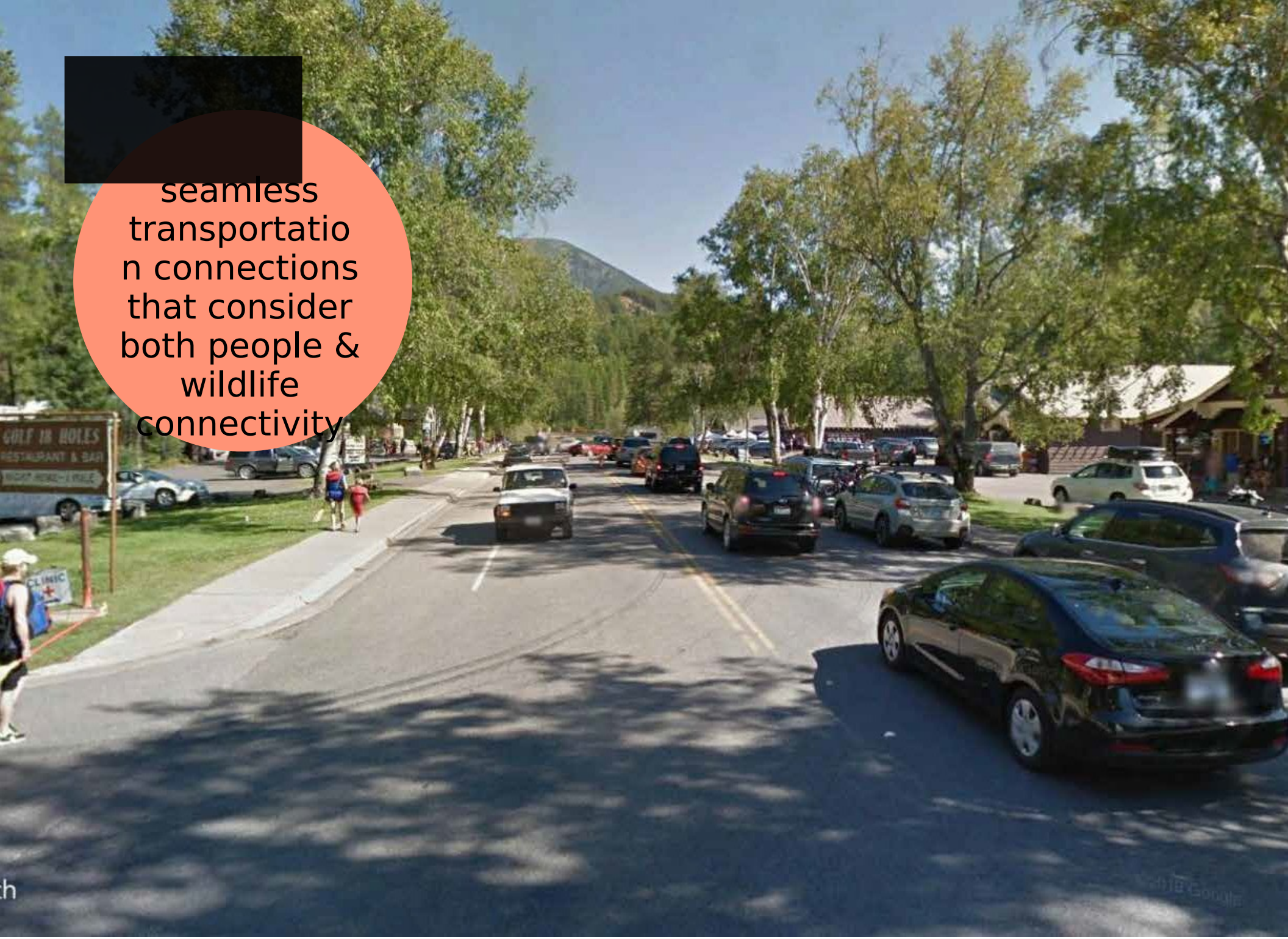
Key Stewardship Actions:

- Work with State Offices of Outdoor Recreation an Tourism and Economic Development to develop a state-specific Recreate Responsibly Toolkit for residents and businesses to communicate about responsible use of the natural resources to visitors.
- Find other common public spaces to convey the community's public service messages about wildfire safet , public safety, wildlife safety and leave no trace practices.
- Develop new partnerships with other NGOs that help support collaborative educational methods/materials and local community stewardship projects including river stewardship activities. See the appendix for a list of possible partners listed under resources.

ACTION AREA 4: Regional Recreation Opportunity Plan

Collaborative regional recreation planning opportunities:

- Collaborate with public, private, tribal and non-profit entities to increase recreation opportunities and economic benefits for everyone. Examine regional solutions when responding to evolving recreational preferences and opportunities (e.g. determining where a facility would fit best)
- Recreation asset mapping at the county and regional level can help identify new opportunities and capitalize on and enhance existing recreational facilities.
- Develop or increase recreational opportunities suited to short, daily a
- Cultivate opportunities for removing barriers for non-typical and underserved audiences such as seniors/retirees, youth, and people with physical or mental disabilities.
- Actively track and evaluate outdoor recreational trends and events to expand the relevancy and competitiveness of Flathead County opportunities beyond Glacier NP.
- Actively market shoulder and cross seasonal opportunities and the range of opportunities available to all skill levels.
- Develop a multi-jurisdictional, county or regional recreation map (web/app- based) to better support recreation opportunities and local economies outside of GNP.
- Maintain a centrally located outdoor activity information center to provide information on resources (trailheads, locations, maps, and activities) and private services (outfitters, guide services, gear rentals, and programs
- Work with partners to better market Wilderness expectations and val
- Expand collaborative planning work with University of Montana Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research and regional tourism entities to support data collection efforts that address visitor management challenges and opportunities.
- Support outdoor recreation businesses interested in finding a home in West Glacier that allows them to innovate and succeed.


seamless transportatio n connections that consider both people & wildlife connectivity

Goal #5: Provide seamless transportation connections that consider both people and wildlife connectivity

Principles:

Seamless transportation is defined as transportation that meets the needs of system users so that where one mode of transit ends, others may be accessed easily from that same location.

Public transit in rural settings must be:

- **Flexible** and utilize a variety of transit types. Rural transit, even with seasonal high visitation, can be challenging to finance without reliable ridership in off seasons.
- Collaborative and enhance planning and cooperation at the local, county, regional and state levels.
- Comprehensive in its ability to provide sufficien coverage, frequency, and choice to address an array of travel goals and destinations. A successful system centralizes and simplifies options

Transportation Priorities:

- Support Regional Transportation Planning
- Support West Glacier Alternative Transportation Planning and Connectivity
- Support Context-Sensitive Parking Solutions
- Support Wildlife-Friendly Transportation Corridors

ACTION AREA 1: Support Regional Transportation Planning

Transportation options across the state and nation are rapidly changing. From additional rail opportunities to self-driving cars, new technologies are transforming the way people get around. Autonomous and shared vehicles will affect how public rights-of-way are planned, parking is accommodated, and infrastructure improvements are designed. Ensure Flathead County and West Glacier is poised to take advantage of new trends in transportation and transit.

Centralized opportunities for public transit are reliant upon the planning for a transit center in conjunction with a public parking garage or other centralized and appropriate location. Such a transit center should accommodate all existing modes (i.e. Buses, local/ regional shuttles, rental car facilities, and bikeshare

facilities). Such regional planning would provide enhanced regional connections between the transit center, local communities, and the Glacier NP GTSR shuttle at Apgar Visitor Center.

- Work with existing transportation partners to enhance and increase our ability to serve both residents and guests. Enhance planning and cooperation at the regional scale with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Federal Highways Administration, Flathead County, Glacier National Park and Glacier Country Tourism to collaborate on planning and communication solutions. These coordination meetings have taken place and more are planned for the future.
- Collaborate with other communities and the county on regional transportation solutions.
- Coordinate with Amtrak and West Glacier to ensure connectivity from the Belton Station to local and regional transportation options.
- Explore regional transportation options and connections such as light rail, BRT, or expanded bus service between Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Whitefish, and other locations within the region.
- A park & ride exists at intersection of Hwy2 and 206 in Columbia Heights. Evaluate adequacy and further needs.
- Identify needs and opportunities for electric vehicles and the sharing economy.
- Cultivate an environment that attracts and supports entrepreneurs and innovators in transit technology including shuttle and ride-hailing entrepreneurs.

- Address traffic congestion and wayfinding signage issues on Hwy 2 & GTSR entry road with MDT:
  - As a community, identify key contacts with MDT and develop meaningful working relationships for ongoing coordination.
  - Work with MDT to perform safety analysis and traffi study. Hwy 2 & entrance road is up for safety review. Crash data and potential crashes could prioritize funding to mitigate problems.
  - Work on bringing speed limit on HWY 2 down to 45 from KOA, as well as from Marias pass.
  - Add a left turn lane on Hwy 2 into the KOA.
  - Address traffi confusion over the merge lane along Hwy 2 turning west from Going-To-The-Sun-Road. Evaluate the need to reduce speed along Hwy 2 through West Glacier as businesses report very hazardous traffi conditions for traffi moving in and out of business parking lots. Also evaluate the need for a bypass lane along Hwy 2 through West Glacier. The issue with getting traffi merging onto HWY 2 west is that people don't know they don't' have to stop which leads to some accidents.
  - Continue the use of MDT digital signage to communicate traffi and construction issues.
  - Complete/analyze/expand UMT traffi data to improve data-based

planning. Pursue resources for enhanced data collection to support regional decision-making.
- Confirm MDT s timeline for performing studies and traffic count
- Work with MDT on developing context-sensitive wayfinding and business signage along West Glacier's Main St and along Hwy 2 that does not have to adhere to the standards of the Manual of Uniform Traffi Control Devices.

The 2020 pandemic saw extreme back-ups on Hwy 2 due to the out and back travel route caused by the closure of the east entrance of the park. The highway patrol directed traffic as a result.

ACTION AREA 2: Support West Glacier Alternative Transportation Planning and Connectivity

Alternative transportation is defined as any transportation mode that is an alternative to the dominant model of a single-driver, car-based system. A successful pedestrian and cyclist environment provides a human-scaled atmosphere with elements such as landscaping and art. US Hwy 2 creates a challenging traffi environment with its wide travel lanes and high speeds because there is a mix of traffi converging within the same few miles. As a state highway, it must fulfill critical regional functions in moving people, goods, and services. However, as the road that presents the critical directional turn through the BNSF overpass and onto GTSR and West Glacier's "Main Street", it sets the character and feel of the community. The key to balancing Main Street's character is to maintain its scale and pace of movement and by adding interest. Many of the design features that provide a pleasant aesthetic experience also provide functional traffi calming benefits, and increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists. West Glacier's pedestrian priorities focus on creating a safe, continuous, comfortable walking environment. This Action Area focuses on promoting walking and cycling through design and Right-of-Way improvements around the community.

- Provide a bicycle system that offers both recreational and in-town connectivity and accommodates all levels of riders.
- Complete the Gateway to Glacier Trail to ensure it functions as the primary bicycle corridor.
- Focus on improving motorist awareness and mutual share-the-road behavior on all roadways through signage and appropriate roadway widths.
- Improve the pedestrian experience through enhanced connectivity locally.
- Initiate a comprehensive signage program to provide intuitive wayfinding throughout West Glacier.
- Enhance Crosswalks through Pedestrian Activated Warning Lights or In-Road Warning Lights. Pedestrian Activated Warning Light are pedestrian devices that are dark until activated by the pedestrian. In-Road Warning Lights are lights that are installed flush within the roadway surface, and provide an

additional level of driver awareness of crosswalks.

- Work with businesses to maintain a continuous, human-scale street frontage along Main Street.
- Work with developers and utility providers to integrate non-buildable areas within easements into the public realm (e.g. public plazas, parklets, or dining areas).
- Work with Main Street property owners to reduce visual impacts and physical conflicts created by vehicular access points (i.e. curb cuts)
- Enhance existing pedestrian crossings to increase pedestrian safety and visibility as well as motorist compliance.
- Plan phased in replacements for street trees along Main Street with any street improvements in order to maintain historic landscape character
- Collect more data/information to further address safety and pedestrian traffi around the community:
  - The two existing pedestrian crossings helped but still impedes traffi
  - Address River Bend Dr safety: Hazardous road conditions exist from the 10mph 'Y' curve through the two 90 degree turns as one enters the Golf Course residential and club house area. The county put up the 10mph sign on the most dangerous corner after being notified of the frequency of near terrible collisions. Residents report that hazardous conditions persist.

ACTION AREA 3: Support Context-Sensitive Parking Solutions

Public parking is limited in this small community but visitors require parking close to natural recreation amenities such as the Flathead River and in-town amenities such as the mercantile and other stores. A recent collaborative business project focused planning and resources on an expanded parking lot in West Glacier to accommodate the rafting outfitters patrons. Previously, these patrons utilized on-street parking along GTSR in town which has been eliminated to encourage pedestrian safety through enhanced crosswalks. This parking lot will be under construction for 2021 and is along the river and convenient for rafters.

- Use wayfindi g elements to help direct people to underutilized parking facilities.
- Evaluate parking needs around Belton and Amtrak station/Depot/Conservancy and plan for improved safety/delineation/communication
- Support the inclusion of publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at existing parking facilities.
- Consider the use of roundabouts to act as a traffic-calmin measure and an opportunity for an aesthetic gateway treatment.

ACTION AREA 4: Support Wildlife-Friendly Transportation Corridors

For reducing the impacts of roads on wildlife, we can take two approaches: one, alter the design of existing roads to facilitate safe wildlife crossings and reducing surrounding environmental impacts, and two, proactively incorporate wildlife into transportation planning so that new roads avoid sensitive areas and habitats to begin with. The following ideas were expressed from stakeholders as future actions in transportation planning for wildlife:

- MDT has indicated that there are no current highway projects that would warrant incorporating new infrastructure for wildlife.
- Laura Reynolds wants to do a survey of animals for DOT.
- NPS was recording wildlife crossings on Hwy 2. Refer to the study results and recommendations to develop and prioritize projects and strategies.
- Look at related studies by the Salish as an example. Banf has implemented a wildlife crossings program- evaluate success rates, how it is working and if there are lessons learned for this area.

RESOURCES

- Federal Transportation Administration Resources: https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/ rural-transportation-planning

- Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access

- MT Updates: https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access/mt

- Linking Conservation and Transportation: Using the State Wildlife Action Plans to Protect Wildlife from Road Impacts https://defenders.org/sites/default/files/publications/linking_ onservation_and_ transportation.pdf

BELTON
West Glacier, MT

Chapter 4: The Path Forward-Implementation

"A successful plan is... a clearly articulated plan implementable via local buy-in and support."

The Path Forward describes an approach that ensures that the community is moving forward with considerations for possible changing conditions and adapting as they prioritize actions over time. For the West Glacier Vision Plan to be realized, it will take the work of the entire community. It will also need to be reviewed and updated periodically. This chapter outlines the implementation and review framework.

VISION PLAN ADOPTION

In order for the West Glacier Vision Plan (WGVP) to be fully utilized, it will need to go through a formal adoption process. The collaborative efforts of the Flathead County Planning Board, the Middle Canyon Land Use Advisory Committee, the West Glacier Vision Planning Team, stakeholders and community members will work to make the WGVP an Addendum to the Canyon Plan.

As an Addendum to the 1994 Canyon Plan

The Canyon Plan was officiall adopted on May 17, 1994. This Neighborhood Plan encompasses approximately 12,000 acres of property starting at the entrance of Badrock Canyon and continuing east to Marias Pass. While the Canyon Plan is getting close to 20 years old, many, if not all, of the goals and policies outlined in the Plan are still applicable today.

The advantage of adopting the WGVP as an addendum to the Canyon Plan is that the Canyon Plan has also been included in the Flathead County Growth Policy and will not need to go through a further process to be included in the Growth Policy. The Vision Plan Goals are in alignment with the Flathead County Growth Policy definition of a Growth Plan[1] and with the Canyon Plan.

This vision plan represents the shared values of the community but it does not say how regulations need to change. Vision plans provide a general direction for planning actions; it is not a regulatory document. If the community wants to amend CALURS with a specific regulatory request it would go through the existing and well-established channels of amending/updating CALURS

This plan focuses almost exclusively on the area in and around West Glacier and the western entrance to Glacier National Park. This plan also identifies th challenges and opportunities that have emerged in the area as a result of the dramatic increase in park visitation over the past decade. The development of the WGVP as described in the body of the plan follows the prescribed guidelines of creating a neighborhood plan outlined in the Flathead County Growth Policy, including initial organizational meetings, identifying existing conditions, drafting the community vision, characteristics, and goals, and preparing the draft. The formal adoption process is similar to the process outlined above with some minor deviations. Because this plan concentrates on an area known as the Middle Canyon, the Middle Canyon Land Use Advisory Committee should conduct a noticed meeting in order to take comments on the plan from members of the public. This committee can then forward a recommendation to the Flathead County Planning Board. This board will conduct a public hearing to take additional comments from members of the public.

Including the WGVP as an addendum to the Canyon Plan as the method of formal adoption makes it become part of the Flathead Growth Policy, with no regulatory requirements. And instead works in tandem with the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS) in the same way the Canyon Plan does.

The Growth Policy definition from the states that It "is not regulatory, but forms the co land use decisions and is a basis for future reg need to address specific issues." CALURS is w have

The Middle Canyon Land Use comm Flathead County Planning Board in on the County website from April to

additional comments from members conclusion of the public hearing an Board may then adopt a resolutio County Commissioners adopt

After

Text Replaced

[Old]: "Including the WGVP as an addendum to the Canyon Plan would appear to be the expedient method of formal adoption. 2. As a Separate Neighborhood Plan Ideally, the WGVP should be adopted as its own

Text Inserted

"44 West Glacier Vision Plan"

1 Growth Policy definition from the Flathead County Growth Plan: (CHAPTER 10) A Growth Policy is a regulatory document created to "ensure the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience or order or the general welfare, and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of community development (76-1-601 M.C.A.). A Growth Policy does so by working with community members to identify a collective vision and develop goals and policies to support and implement that vision over time.

Commissioners shall consider this recommendation and adopt a amendment resolution of intent and subsequently adopt the WGVP as an

Text Deleted

Text Replaced

[Old]: "This adoption process can be accomplished by one of the two following methods: 1." [New]: "The collaborative efforts of the Flathead

Text Inserted

"Including the WGVP as an addendum to the Canyon Plan as the method of formal adoption makes it become part of the Flathead Growth Policy, with no regulatory requirements. And instead works in tandem with the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS) in the same way the Canyon Plan does

to the Canyon Plan as outlined in 76-1-603, M.C.A.

WGVP and the 1994 Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS)

Subsequent to the adoption of the Canyon Plan in 1994, land use regulations were developed to implement the goals and policies of the plan. The WGVP encompasses an area that is located within the Middle Canyon area as defined in CALURS. It is anticipated that with the adoption of this plan, specific amendments to CALURS may be necessary to implement the goals, policies and vision of the WGVP. As currently written, CALURS appears to be lacking in regulations that specifically address the opportunities that exist within the planning area of the WGVP. Also lacking in CALURS is the ability develop commercial or mixed use projects that can better serve the growing number of visitors to Glacier National Park. Once the WGVP is adopted, development pressure within the WGVP planning area should be monitored to determine how the land use regulations can be amended to facility the continuation of the community's vision of West Glacier while providing an enhanced visitor experience. Some elements that should be considered in any amendment to CALURS are clearly enumerated design standards, including architectural standards, landscaping, signage, buffering, and parking standards. Another existing element of CALURS that should be considered is expanding the "designated service area." This is an area within the heart of the West Glacier community that is, currently, reserved for non-residential development. With additional performance standards and other impact mitigating regulations, the service area could be expanded to facilitate additional development as long as that development continues to comply with the vision outlined in the WGVP.

WGVP and the 2022 Flathead Cou

The current Flathead County Growth
12, 2012. While known in many area
Growth Policy outlines goals and pol
the delivery of services throughou
suggests that a Growth Policy be re
every five years. The pending releas
coupled with the ongoing coronavir
update of the Growth Policy which
the first half of 2020 has been delay
the WGVP, the community vision and
incorporated in the updated Growt
address transportation needs and m
of the West Glacier area.

Text Inserted

"to the Canyon Plan"

Text Deleted

---- "44"

Amendments to the West Glacier Vision Plan

As amendments to the WGVP become necessary, the Middle Canyon Land Use Advisory Committee and the Flathead County Planning Board will be responsible for making recommendations to the County Commissioners. The County Commissioners will be responsible for adopting a final resolution, adopting any amendments. A major update to the WGVP shall be considered every ten years. Plan amendments may be accomplished by one of the following planning actions:

- ***Administrative Plan Amendments*** – Editorial or minor changes or revisions to the plan text, figures, or maps that reflect updated information, or grammatical or punctuation corrections may be processed without a public process.

Text Inserted

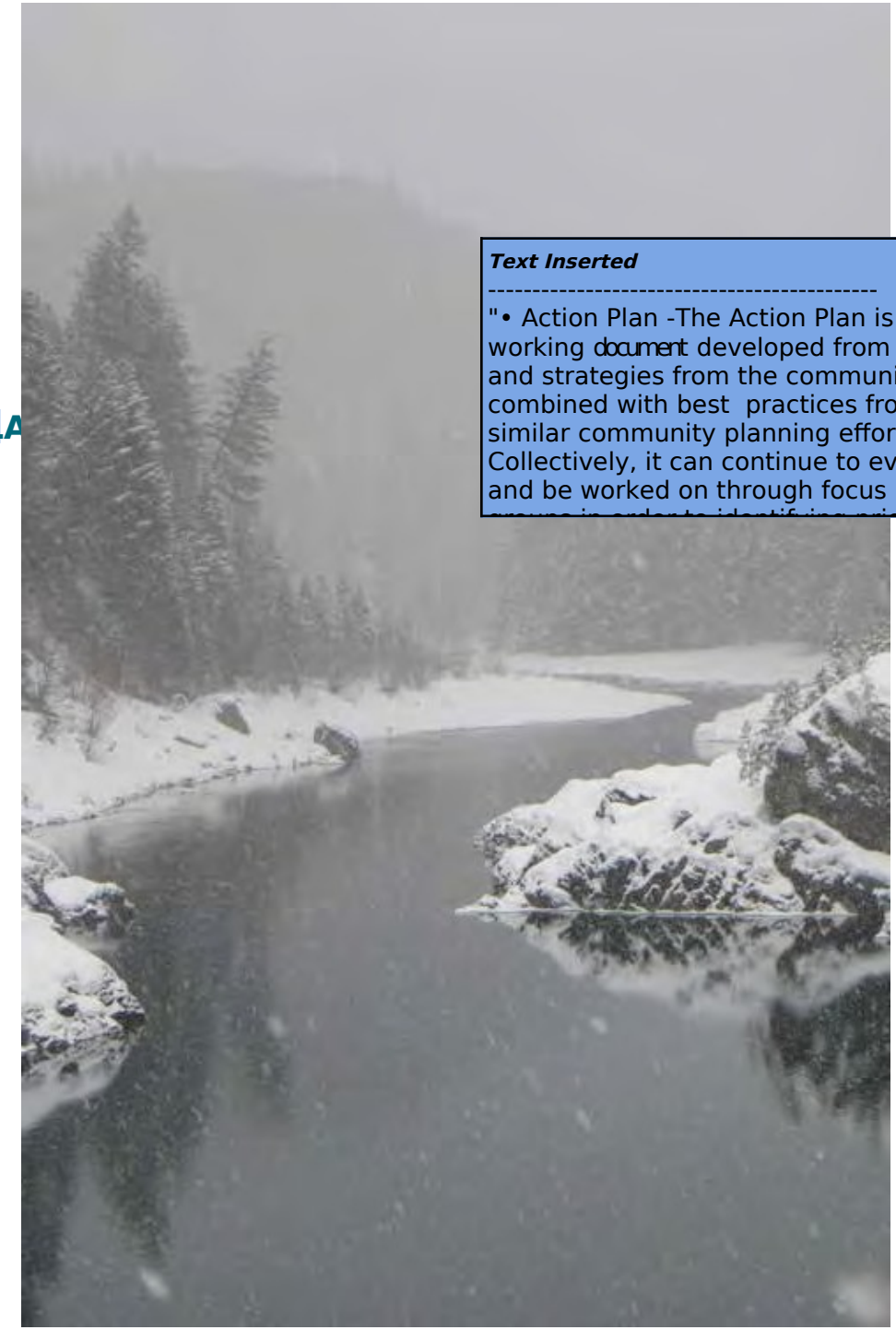
---- "45"

- ***Vision Plan Amendments*** – Changes to language that alter the intent of the plan's principles or policies should incorporate a public process and formal adoption by the County Commissioners.
- ***Major Plan Update*** – A chance to reconfirm the plan's vision and direction with the public every ten years or as conditions in the area substantially change. Major plan updates can be directed by the residents of the WGVP planning area, County planning staff, the Planning Board, or the County Commissioners.
- ***Action Plan*** - The Action Plan is a working document developed from ideas and strategies from the community, combined with best practices from similar community planning efforts. Collectively, it can continue to evolve and be

PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNITY ROLES & VISION PLA
COLLABORATIVE WORKING GROUP

The entire community, both residents and businesses has a role in realizing this vision plan, and it is essential that the community remains vested throughout implementation. The following are some suggestions for how the plan may move forward on an annual basis:

1. An open, collaborative working group made up of a cross-section of residents, businesses, agencies and/or partner organizations should meet quarterly or at a regular frequency to exchange information regarding priority efforts they are working on or WGVP actions they might collaborate on. This group is referenced as a communications strategy in Goal #3.
2. This group may consider working with neighboring communities to grow support and pool resources to find mutually-beneficial solutions to shared issues.
3. The WGVP goals should be reviewed annually with community work groups created to prioritize the actions the groups would like to work on. These groups should be self-selected and open to anyone interested. The only pre-requisite is that the groups be collaborative in nature and willing to be open to new ideas and approaches. Efforts should be made to engage new and diverse community members. Working groups should be open to new members at any time.
4. The working groups should determine a method for reporting out on progress or at decision-making points to the community through community meetings, digital outlets, newsletters or other



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"• Action Plan -The Action Plan is a working document developed from ideas and strategies from the community, combined with best practices from similar community planning efforts. Collectively, it can continue to evolve and be worked on through focus

outlets.

Appendix A

Resources

Stewardship Organizational Resources

National:
National Parks Conservation Association (npca.org)
American Rivers (americanrivers.org)
River Management
Society River Network

State:
Montana Wilderness Association (wildmontana.org)
Crown of the Continent Geotourism (crownofthecontinent.net)
Water Compact (http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/water-compact-implementa- tion-program/docs/compact-summaries/2016-12-11-summary-of-cskt-compact- and-ordinance-final.pdf

Local:
Glacier Park Conservancy (glacier.org)
West Glacier Preservation Association (no website) Flathead River Alliance (no website)
Citizens for a Better Flathead (citizensforabetterflathead.org Glacier Institute (glacierinstitute.org)
Flathead Lakers (flatheadlakers.or
North Fork Preservation Association (gravel.org) Whitefish Lake Institute volunteer lake monitoring grou (Whitefishlake.org/science-programs/#monitoring Northwest Montana Lakes Network
Flathead Lake Biological Station, at Yellow Bay

Short Term Rental Resources

Dr Jeremy Sage jeremy.sage@mso.umt.edu
Economist & Interim Director
Institute For Tourism And Recreation Research
Currently working on a project reviewing the prevalence of, and structure if any, regulations around STRs in Montana.

Placemaking Resources

- https://arts.psu.edu/news/landscape-architecture-professor-develops-on- line-training-in-streetscape-design/
- https://westgov.org/initiatives/podcasts/reimagining-the-rural-west-initiative
- https://www.scenic.org/blog/place-making-institute-cultivates-resourc- es-for-smart-development/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=f07c- be5e-7152-42e8-bb92-c01bdda2948d
- https://placemakinginstitute.org/
- USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (technical assistance) https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/initiatives/rural-placemaking-innova- tion-challenge

Exploring Community Resources Outside The Park

https://glaciermt.com/outside-glacier-park

Appendix B

Mindmixer Public Engagement Feedback Summary and Comments

Welcome to West Glacier Community Vision's Reporting Interface

The **Reporting Interface** displays all of the activity from your project.

All Closed Topics

Engagement

DETAILS

13
Closed Topics

ACTIVITY

160
Interactions

5
Comments

5
Shares

Participants

TOTAL

31
Participants

GENDER

28%
Male

72%
Female

AGE

14-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%

POSTAL CODE

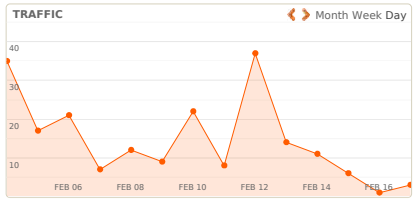
59936	54.8%
59911	6.5%
59937	6.5%
20815	3.2%
59901	3.2%
59913	3.2%
59936-	3.2%
60033	3.2%
80433	3.2%
80920	3.2%

View All Postal Codes

Demographic information may not be provided on 100% of participants.

Welcome to West Glacier Community Vision's Reporting Interface

The **Reporting Interface** displays all of the activity from your project.



TOTAL TRAFFIC
Page Views
3,744

YOUR AVERAGE PARTICIPANT IS...
Female
45 Years Old Living in these Postal Codes:
59936, 59937, 59901

Demographic information may not be provided on 100% of participants.

SHARING

Facebook 1	Google+ 0
Twitter 0	Email 5
LinkedIn 1	

Top Shared Item https://westglacier.

Community Communications

Results

What is your preferred form of communications for knowing what is going on in your community & how you can get involved?

E-newsletter	12 votes
A designated clearinghouse website for links to all	7 votes
Local newspaper	5 votes
County website	4 votes
Nextdoor app for informal community sharing	4 votes
Word-of-mouth	2 votes
Searching out a few different websites	1 vote

Seamless Transportation Connections

Results

What transportation additions would you support to ease congestion?

Question 1

Which of the following transportation-related additions would you support to help ease traffic issues/congestion in West Glacier or along Highway 2?

Add more park and ride/shuttle pick up areas along Highway 2 to provide parking for more shared rides, shuttle or Lyft/Uber opportunities	1 vote
Other: See Idea Report	3 votes
More safe pedestrian/bike paths/connections.	3 votes
A connected shuttle system that runs from communities in the valley to West Glacier and the Park	2 votes

Preserving West Glacier's Timelessness

Results

How would you preserve West Glacier's "sense of place"?

Question 1

What kinds of policies, standards or guidelines would you support along the

Design standards for landscape improvements	1 vote
Other: See Idea Report	5 votes
Planting standards	0 votes
Infrastructure standards, i.e. sidewalk widths, bike lanes/sidepath	2 votes

Zip Code	Topic Name	Idea Title	Idea Summary
225280	Making One Safety Change	Add more fire escape routes.	West Glacier has only one, very narrow, access point to Hwy 2. There need to be more.
225274	Making One Safety Change	Improve pedestrian and bicycle access/safety	Improve / provide sidewalks and crosswalks. Slow traffic down even more through W Glacier along Hwy 2. Provide parking lots along Hwy 2.
225310	Making One Safety Change	Reduce the speed limit	The speed limit should be lowered from 65 to 45, if not through the whole corridor, then at least in front of the businesses just before the entrance to the Park.
225358	Making One Safety Change	Speed limit on Highway 2	I would like to see the speed limit on Highway 2 reduced to 35 mph from the east corner by the Belton to 1/2 mile up the road to the West.
225315	Making One Safety Change	Summer traffic is affected by pedestrians	We need to create a better walking trail system that doesn't impede traffic flow during the summer. I love the fact that pedestrians are walking around WG, but when traffic has to constantly stop for road crossings - it affects the traffic in & out of Glacier.
225374	Making One Safety Change	SPEED LIMITS--and enforced!	We already do have a Speed Limit of 25 mph on our road-Riverbend Dr.....but it is never enforced. The biggest offenders are the private rafters who recklessly speed all summer endangering everyone. Ask anyone on our road what issue we deal with....and they will all say immediately---SPEEDERS!
225699	Safe Bicycle & Pedestrian routes	Continue the outstanding bike path along Hwy 2 (currently...	...stops at the underpass) through WG in the old road-side parking spots (could be turned into bike lanes) that continues into the park gate. Once through the gate cyclists could pick up the Apgar bike trail or continue on the roadside into the Park.
225270	West Glacier is a Special Place	It's rural, not overly commercialized	Many National Park entrances are a smear of commercial development. While W Glacier hasn't escaped this plague, it's getting there. Commercial development and hi-density developments are beginning to drastically change an area that is an important n-s wildlife corridor.
225276	West Glacier is a Special Place	Close to nature.	I love the sound of bugling elk, bear scat in my backyard, ospreys overhead.
225252	West Glacier is a Special Place	It's the Historic Bridge to the Crown of the Continent and..	..needs our respect and protection.
225562	West Glacier is a Special Place	We love the beauty of the area and the simplicity of life.	The folks of West Glacier have respect for the natural area and their neighbors. We tend to be to ourselves but can rally when necessary
225306	West Glacier is a Special Place	It all starts with the beauty of the land	West Glacier has a long history of people coming to enjoy and appreciate its beauty. It is wild and free and because of that, it retains a rural character and has so far remain protected from big business.
225312	West Glacier is a Special Place	I value the natural charm and small size of the community.	West Glacier is such a unique community that should keep its historic character and be a eco-conservation steward as the Gateway To Glacier.
225372	West Glacier is a Special Place	That, as of now, West Glacier is still "our" community.	We do not want it to become a "side show" of activities designed to entertain tourists. We are not the Park, and should be allowed to maintain our community integrity.
225512	West Glacier is a Special Place	Having a focus on the natural environment	WG has a quaint feel to it with an emphasis on preserving a small town atmosphere focusing on the natural environment. It has a slowed down pace of living without being overly commercialized.
225292	West Glacier is a Special Place	Simplicity, Quaint Beauty, Spectacular Surroundings	National Park Gateway communities give visitors an immediate idea about the park they are about to visit. Upon seeing the simple, Swiss-style architecture, a few commercial venues, green grass, trees, sidewalks, and no big corporate businesses, the appearance of a slower, earlier time emerges, giving visitors a new experience. As every town begins to looks like every other it is hard to tell if you are in Kalispell, Salt Lake City or Cleveland. West Glacier's character has remained basically the same for over 100 years. I place a gigantic value on my town's character and think by crowding the town with more commercial venues it begins to lose the simple charm visitors find so appealing.
225319	West Glacier is a Special Place	Neighbors caring for the environment and each other.	The sense of community is very strong in West Glacier. Neighbors help each other and take care of the environment of the community and surrounding areas. It is a beautiful place that needs to retain its beauty.
225330	West Glacier is a Special Place	Its serenity; it is calm, peaceful, beautiful, natural.	The most wonderful thing about West Glacier is its unique quaint and natural ambiance. It does not have stoplights, no Walmarts or Targets. The wilderness has been left almost untouched, enough to where you can expect to see wildlife just driving through - even on the main road. When you see wildlife, you know it's because you're in their territory and not because the animals are habituated and being feed like some other parks and natural areas.

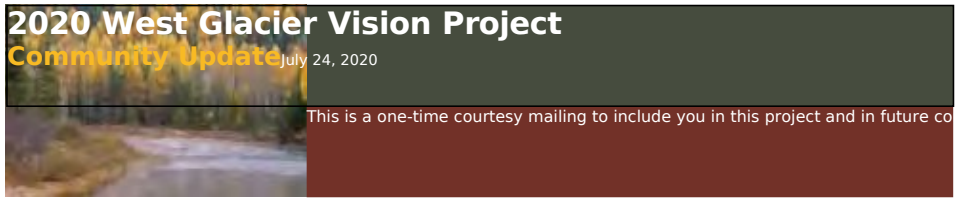
225364	West Glacier is a Special Place	Our needs for more bike paths	The Bike Path that GPI/Pursuit put in has been appreciated by many. But we sure need more paths as the traffic has gotten so bad, it is down right dangerous to walk or bike on our roads!!
225734	West Glacier is a Special Place	The vast amount of water features	I have always loved to visit Lake McDonald, St Mary, Two Medicine, Avalanche Lake, Flathead River, and Lake McDonald Creek.
225331	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Keep preserving! Stop building. Monitor visitation.	If more trees are logged and more buildings are built, then inevitably more people will take over the wildlife areas that allow this town to be so unique. Fewer trees and more buildings and people mean less of a reason to visit, less originality, and more negative effects on wildlife as well as any visitor's serene experience.

225293	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Attempting to Keep the Integrity of WG's Character	One of our strengths appeared almost thirty years ago, in 1992, when a group of West Glacier and Canyon area residents got together with the idea of guiding the planning process for our rapidly changing West Glacier/Canyon area. After two years of meetings and preparing various documents related to this project "The Canyon Plan" was created. Adopted by the County in 1994 this citizen-initiated Plan is still in use today. If you haven't seen a copy you can download it off Flathead County Planning and Zoning's website. The companion document, Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System,(CALURS) adopted in 1994, helps guide development in our area. A volunteer, three-person, local citizen review panel called The Middle Canyon Land Use Advisory Committee or MCLUAC, meets most months to give local residents a chance to hear about new developments or project and give local residents a chance to voice their opinions. We, as a community, could do better by supporting and attending these monthly me
225271	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Pedestrian and bike friendly, but could be improved	Improve pedestrian crossing of Hwy 2. Keep the community low density and seasonal.
225277	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Stop development.	The new monster RV park is a disaster.
225307	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	We appreciate what we have but we can do more to protect it	West Glacier is pristine and the people here seem to take good care of it by acting responsibly and pulling together initiatives to clean up trash along the highway. But, we could do better with recycling programs, more connectivity between trails and bike paths, and a reduced speed limit right before the entrance to the Park.
225313	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	The most important strength is the natural resources.	The most important strength is the natural resources that surround the community; we shouldn't let it become a tourist trap full of inauthentic shops and activities that don't represent the character of the area.
225324	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Historic entrance to Glacier. Small scale shops/housing.	West Glacier is "comfortable" an welcoming to residents and a wide range of visitors. It does not feel "developed" and has not lost its character.
225365	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	Bigger is NOT always better	We need a stop to the growth that GPI/Pursuit is doing to our West Glacier community! Now there is word of a new hotel/restaurant, etc being built on Hwy 2---the ONLY entrance into West Glacier and Glacier National Park. The traffic ALL summer on this stretch of Hwy 2 is OUT OF CONTROL!!!
225513	What kind of community do you want to craft for the next generation?	WG is a community that has 2 'worlds' summer and not summer	It is amazing that WG can scale up during summer months to try to accommodate tourism to the Park- and then scale down to such a small community during the fall/winter/spring months. Since there is no local government, it would help to have some sort of town council concerned with local issues. The MCLUAC has helped- but as the Flathead County liaison has stated- they have no real power- and deal with major land use issues primarily. It would be nice to have a town council that is operated independently from the County and concerned with broader issues.
225273	Communities We Can Learn From	More important to define the values you want to retain.	I don't have other communities in mind. W Glacier and community citizens must clearly articulate the values they want to retain and then clearly articulate the rules that will inform how planning decisions will be made. It's easy to be vague about values and sloppy in decision making. If conserving wildlife values and the wildlife corridor turn out to be a vital concern for the community (and I hope they will be) then the decision making around how to conserve those values must be firm with, for example, no-go zones for development, setbacks. Alternatively, areas should be identified for conservation easements and a process and calendar to engage land trusts to acquire those easements must be clearly articulated.
225326	Communities We Can Learn From	Downtown Whitefish.	Strong planning reflecting local values has maintained the western feel of downtown Whitefish. It provides a template to resist developments that would be out of scale. West Glacier should not become a Disneyland clone.
225351	Communities We Can Learn From	Safety suggestion: Traffic light	On Rte 2 with a left turn arrow into WG.
225281	Communities We Can Learn From	Boulder CO where growth is limited	Lake McDonald storm.

225298	Communities We Can Learn From	Extend/improve bike/walker paths; refurbish BNSF overpass	A paved bike/pedestrian path should be extened to the river access site near the golf course as well as to the school. The bike/walker path near the BNSF overpass needs to be widened since it narrows down at a blind curve that make it difficult for bikers and walkers to see each other and both fit safely on the path. The whole area on all sides of the overpass needs to be landscaped, the overpass refurbished and repainted. It was re-painted in the early 2000's but now is stained, dirty and the paint is peeling. The area needs to be landscaped and weeds removed. In the 1980's the WG Women's Club created flowers beds, grass, and benches to welcome people to the community. It is now weedy and overgorwn. Creating a pleasant public area with native plants, a place to sit and watch people, bikes, cars and trains go by would be a welcoming sight to the nearly three million visitors who pass under the overpass each year.
225279	Communities We Can Learn From	Marin County, California	Marin has avoided urban sprawl and is still livable as a result.
225309	Communities We Can Learn From	Look at other Gateway Communities	We should look at all other gateway communities to National Parks (in Montana and throughout the US) and emulate things they have done well and make sure to avoid mistakes they have made.
225290	West Glacier in One Word	Unique	Driving under the BNSF overpass one gets the first glimpse of our town, West Glacier. It looks and feels different, unique; there is still room to breathe, to walk, ride a bike, take your time, sit on the grass and visit. The buildings remind one of an older, quieter, simpler, less materialistic time. For many visitors coming from home towns where commercial development, corporate fast food and retail businesses, along with big parking lots dominate their landscape. Driving into West Glacier on their way to visit Glacier National Park is an unexpected surprise, a preview of what is to come as they visit Glacier National Park. We have begun to see the effects of overcrowding as three million visitors are now flowing into Glacier each year. By working together, it is my hope that we can plan a way to keep our uncluttered, simple, unique character and continue to provide Glacier with a gateway community befitting this Crown Jewel of a National Park.
225272	West Glacier in One Word	Glacier	West Glacier is a primary access point to Glacier Park. Glacier Park, wild Glacier Park, defines the community that provides access. Glacier is a predominantly (95%) wilderness managed park. Keep W Glacier in close harmony with this character. Resist high residential developments and impacts; keep the character of W Glacier rural/rustic with a unified architectural theme; any development must not further erode the wildlife corridor that surrounds the town.
225278	West Glacier in One Word	Perfect location	It has Glacier Nat. Park, Flathead River, Bob Marshall Wilderness, and urban amenities nearby.
225308	West Glacier in One Word	Quaint	It’s picturesque, charming and sweet.
225314	West Glacier in One Word	Historic.	It's the Gateway To Glacier - it should represent the best entrance to GNP on the west side without being a tourist trap.
225325	West Glacier in One Word	History.	Historic character connected to the early days of the Park -- the train station, Empire Builder, log buildings, connection to the Middle Fork.
225334	West Glacier in One Word	Individual	It's impossible to sum up this town in one word. It's different than any other place I've ever been! Please keep it that way.
225366	West Glacier in One Word	BEAUTIFUL AND SPECIAL	We need business developers to also look at the beauty and majestic scenery that is everywhere you look in West Glacier and leave it as natural as it is.
225514	West Glacier in One Word	Peaceful	The natural beauty of the area helps you to connect to nature and feel a sense of peace - even when it is very busy! It is quiet, and slow paced most of the year. It is important to preserve a peaceful feel as the area grows and even during the summer months.

Appendix C

2020 Community Newsletter and Public Service Announcement



VISION PLAN UPDATE

The West Glacier Vision Project envisions the community as a nexus for recreation, a high quality of life, healthy lifestyles and sustainable development while retaining unique historic qualities and abundant natural scenic beauty.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the West Glacier Vision Project Team is committed to the 2020 planning timeline but also to the community's engagement needs so that they have the time and space to work with their challenges and still be able to continue participation. The project team has synthesized public comments received during the round of public and stakeholder engagement done in February 2020.

The following key themes were developed from the feedback heard at February public and stakeholder meetings and through the Mindmixer online planning website:

1. Preserve Community Character and Sense of Place
2. Provide Seamless Transportation Connections
3. Guide Sustainable Business Development
4. Enhance Community Communications and Participation
5. Create a Safe and Resilient Community
6. Support Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

The West Glacier Vision Project Team will shift to a combination of virtual and outdoor meetings as well as online engagement opportunities for the health and safety of our communities. Community members are encouraged to engage in the process for visioning the future West Glacier, via the Mindmixer site and by signing up for updates. The project planning team is also reaching out to part-time residents, vacation rental owners and business owners about this project to develop collaborative communication strategies for now and into the future.

Planning partner Pursuit has created a model safety pledge that enables visitors to anticipate the level of precautions being taken: https://www.pursuitcollection.com/safety-promise/

ENGAGE & GET UPDATES!

PLEASE VISIT THE INTERACTIVE WEBSITE T
& ADD YOUR IDEAS- Please register and
https://westglacier.mindmixe
For future plan and e-community updates pleas
For wildfire updates contact

PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS FOR EVERYONE

PREVENT THE SPREAD!

- Wash hands thoroughly and often. Cover your cough.

Avoid touching your face. Practice social distancing.

Avoid close contact with people who are ill. Wear a

If you have concerns about unsafe activi
the Flathead County Health Department:
https://flatheadhealth.org/covid-19-directives-

They will make contact with property owner to discuss
requirements under the current phase.
Continued
complaints are referred to the County Attorney's office

COVID TESTING CENTER & URGENT CARE (operated by North Valley

Both the Clinic and Urgent Care are located at 120 Going to the Sun Road, West Glacier, MT. Testing for Urgent Care DAILY 9AM – 5PM. No coronavirus antibody or asymptomatic testing is done at this site. Please call (406-751-8101 or 406-888-

SHORT-TERM RENTAL (STR) REMINDERS FOR OWNERS &

See CALURS/Middle Canyon Land Use Regulations Chapter 4, Short-Term Rental Housing

STRs must provide in-case-of-emergency contact information. The contact should be available 24 hrs a day,

to respond within one hour in an emergency. Guests: If you don't have the in case of emergency # for your
at 406-751-

If you operate a STR make sure State of Montana Housing Public Accommodation License for a Tourist Home

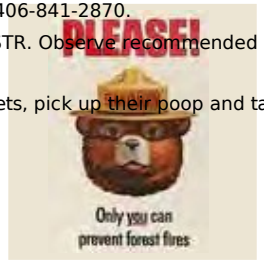
Flathead City-County Health Department: 406-751-8101.

STRs are subject to the State Bed (Lodging) Tax. Owners must collect and convey it to the state. These monie

Dept of Commerce for tourism promotion. For more information call: 406-841-2870.

Parking & Quiet Hours Park only in designated places provided by the STR. Observe recommended quiet hou

Wildlife & Human Neighbors Store all food and garbage inside. Leash pets, pick up their poop and take it with

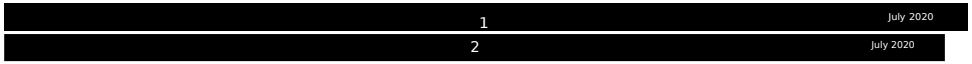


WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

WEST GLACIER COMMUNITY VISION

PLAN PROCESS - PHASES

Public Outreach



Extinguish all campfires and cigarettes completely.

Contact the Montana House (406-888-5646, mthouse@centurylink.net) for updates on the Wildfire Adaptive Community Plan and Programs – a collaboration with Department of Natural Resources & Conservation, Office of Emergency Services, Glacier National Park, US Forest Service, Canyon Fire Departments, the Montana

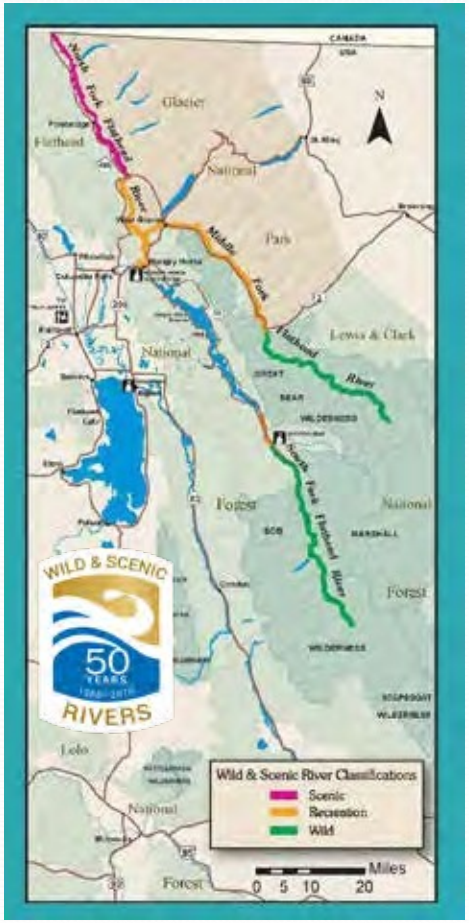
Flathead County Community Wildfire Protection Plan:
https://flathead.mt.gov/fireservice/documents/Community_Wildfire_Protection_Plan_2020_v3_July_9_final.pd

Check fire conditions at Kalispell Interagency Dispatch Center https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dc/mtkic/.

Appendix D

Three Forks of the Flathead History

An Inspirational River: The 3 Forks of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River



- **1940-50's:** Dam building on the lower end of the South Fork of the Flathead (Hungry Horse Dam), proposed dams on the North Fork (Glacier View Dam and Smoky Range Dam), and on the Middle Fork (Spruce Park Dam).
- **1956-57:** John Craighead and Montana Fish and Game employees float the Upper Middle Fork, and believed it to be one of America's last, wildest rivers. Inspired, John writes an opinion piece proposing a classified river system, of wild, semi wild, and semi-exploited rivers, which would protect rivers like the Middle Fork.
- **Early 1960's:** Public support for proposed dams on the North Fork wanes due to concerns of inundation of Glacier National Park and private homesteads, while sportsman groups oppose losses to wildlife habitat. In contrast, increasing support for damming the Upper Middle Fork with the proposed Spruce Park Dam, including a plan to construct a tunnel through the Flathead Range to deliver impounded water to Hungry Horse Reservoir (which would result in dewatering of the Middle Fork).
- **1964:** Catastrophic spring flooding in northwest Montana increases support for dam construction, including Montana Senator Metcalf putting pressure to the Bureau of Reclamation to build the proposed Spruce Park Dam.
- **1965:** Senator Metcalf co-sponsors the original legislative bill to create a protected river system, at the same time assuring local Flathead River constituents that the 3 Forks will never be added to this system.
- **1968:** Wild and Scenic Rivers Act signed into law. Responding to Montana's conservation-minded constituents, Senator Metcalf allows the 3 Forks to be added as a study river.
- **Oct. 12th, 1976:** Following a U.S. Forest Service study, Senator Metcalf sponsors an amendment to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, adding the 3 Forks of the Flathead River system, as well as the Upper Missouri River in Montana.

North Fork of the Flathead River

Construction of Hungry Horse Dam

John Craighead's Initial Proposal Article

Belton Bridge – 1964 Flood

Senator Metcalf and Howard Zanhiser

Middle Fork of the Flathead River

South Fork of the Flathead River

Contact Information:

- Colter Pence, Flathead National Forest cfpence@fs.fed.us

Appendix E

Three Forks of the Flathead Co-Management

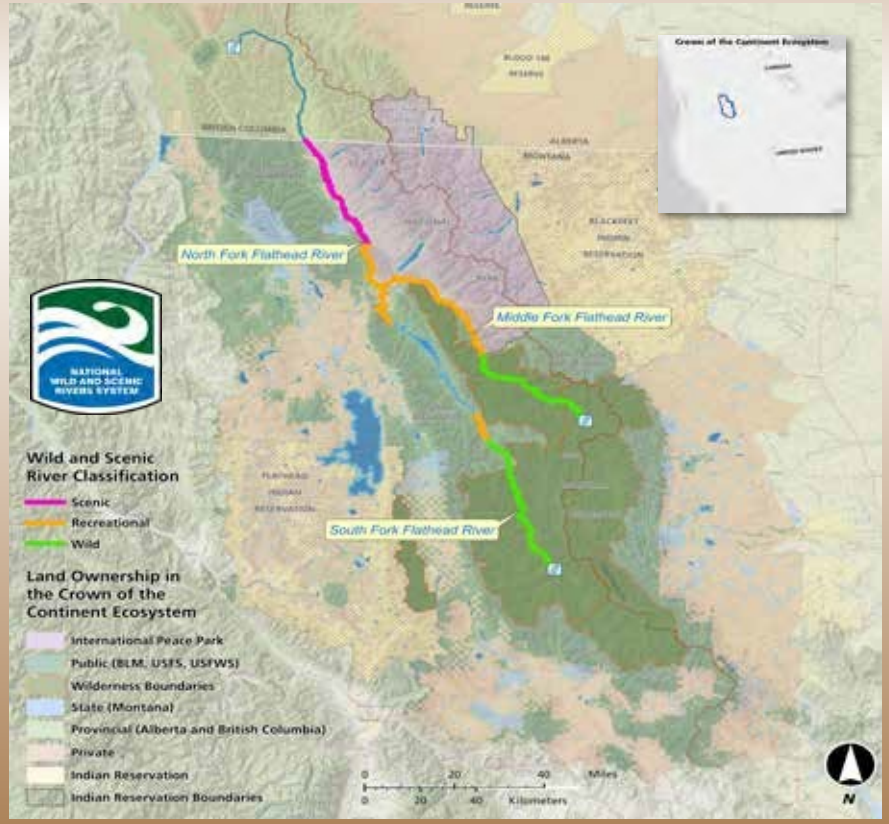
Cooperative Management of the 3 Forks of the Flathead Wild & Scenic River

Flathead National Forest & Glacier National Park

Flathead National Forest & Glacier National Park

Collaboration

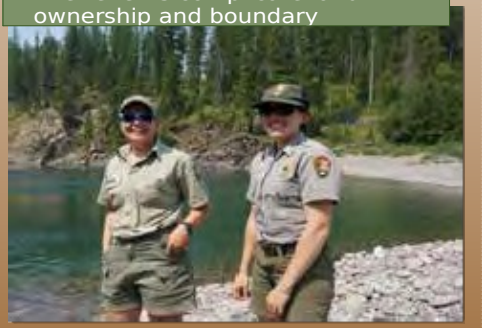
- Joint resource management – the agencies are working together to develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan
- Collaborative training – professional and technical river skills training has been jointly developed, and offered to staff with both agencies
- Sharing of staff and expertise – crossing boundaries for planning river access site development, river patrols, interpretive opportunities, and monitoring
- Leveraging funding resources – at various times each agency has accessed funds to support river management
- Integration of volunteers – Glacier National Park's robust volunteer program has been shared by integrating these volunteers into Flathead National Forest river ranger patrols
- Boundary management – avulsive river events complicate land ownership and boundary



River Management Challenges

- Transportation of hazardous materials in the Middle Fork corridor
- Invasive Species – aquatic and vegetation
- Increasing visitation and river use
- Coal mine development in British Columbia (North Fork headwaters)
- Differing agency missions

Left: Interagency River Skills Training on the Middle Fork of the Flathead River



Contact Information

- Colter Pence, Flathead National Forest, cfpence@fs.fed.us
- Mary Riddle, Glacier National Park,

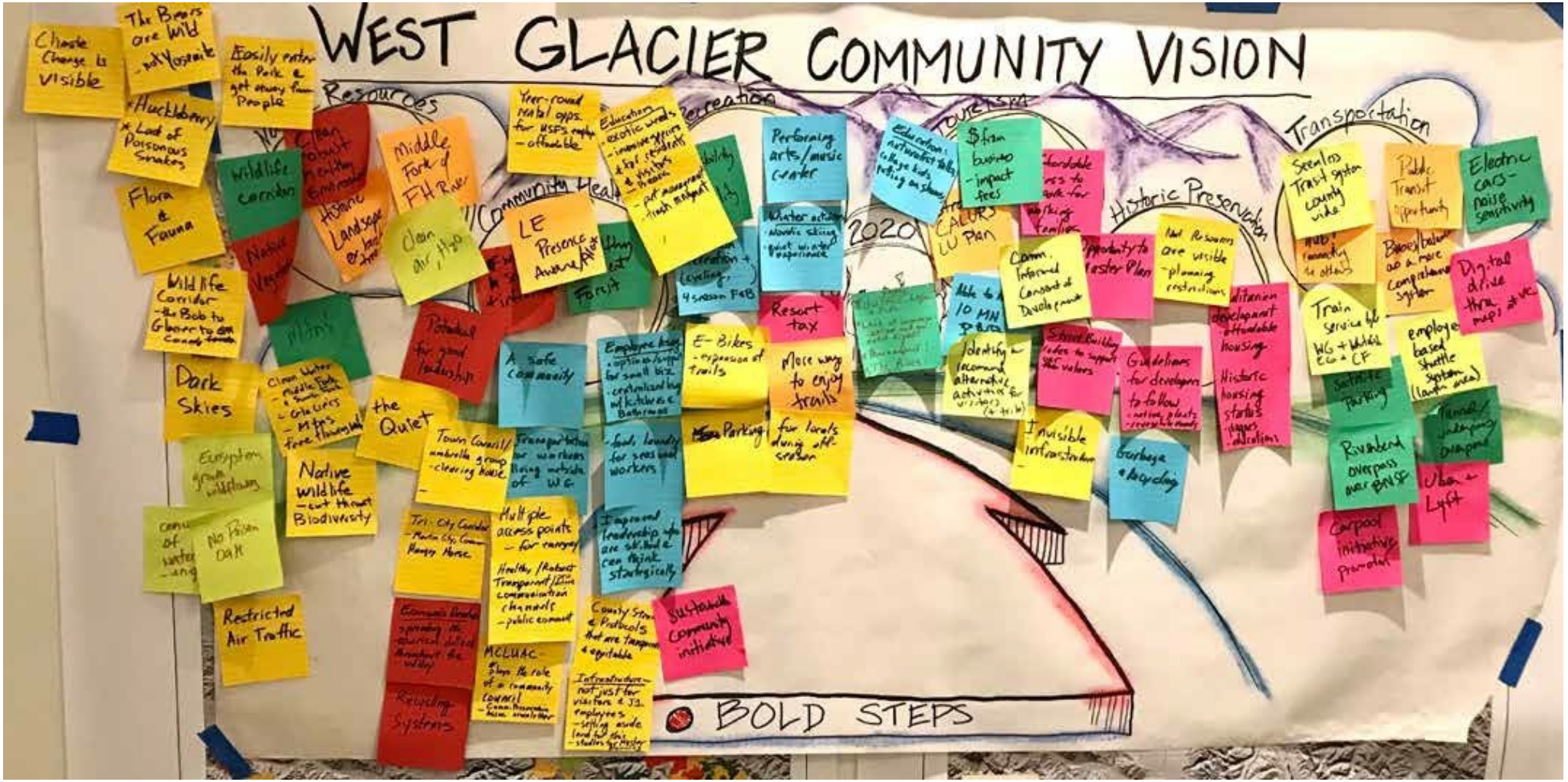
www.fs.usda.gov/flathead

gov/glac/index.htm

Above: USFS and NPS River Ranger Patrol

Appendix F

February 2020 Meeting Input



Appendix G

February 2020 Meeting Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Kalispell 9	Kal, Whitefish 10	West Glacier 11	Kalispell 12	West Glacier 13	WG-Kalispell 14
Post flyer project info **2/8 Friday: Send last press release**	**9:00** Patsy Meet with Mark Mussman **1pm** Meeting with Columbia Falls & Whitefish Chamber of Commerce & Tourism entities Location: Whitefish **2:30** Call with Doug Mitchell by phone	Meetings with plan- ning team members as available **Site Visits:** Town, Can- yon, GLAC Entry Recreation accesses	**9-10:00** *Meeting with Xanterra office* Marc Ducharme/ Columbia Falls **12-2pm** Flathead Conser- vation Roundtable (FWS office Kalispell) **2:45** *Set-up at FCC* **3-4:30 Participants:** Transportation/Emergenc y Services/County **6pm Evening Public Meeting** at Flathead Community College	*All meetings at Montana House* **9-10:00** ITRR/UMT **10:00-11:30** Rafting Companies **12-1:30** GLAC sister park brownbag **2-3:30** Businesses **3:30-5** Overflow **6pm Evening Public Meeting** at West Glacier Montana House Residents	**9:30-10:30 GLAC** **meeting 12-1pm** Meet with Diane Medler, Director of Kallispell Chamber of Commerce

Stakeholder & Public Engagement Activity Schedule

Groups to represent:

1. Businesses - Middle Canyon & West Glacier - combined
2. Residents - FT in Feb, PT in June
3. Agencies (combine in other groups and/or seperately)
4. County Safety/Emergency Services personnel
5. Transportation
6. Tourism reps
7. Conservation Roundtable
8. Cambers of Commerce

Schedule separately:

1. Kat McMahon - contacted, available Mon, adding other Whitefish reps
2. Mitchell/Glacier Conservancy - scheduled
3. Marc/Xanterra - scheduled
4. Rachel Vandevort - state Dept - Outdoor Recreation - scheduled
5. Jan Stoddard - Montana Economic Development - scheduled
6. Salish-Kootenai-Tribal representatives (NPCA follow up)
7. Dylan Boyle/Explore Whitefish - scheduled
8. Racene Friede/Glacier Country Tourism - scheduled

Flathead County Planning Definitions, Terms and

The following includes references to the
MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED:

Section 76-1-601 of Montana Code Annotated (M.C.A.) establishes a requirement for all county and municipal jurisdictions in the state of Montana to prepare a growth policy. A growth policy is not regulatory but forms the conceptual foundation for future land use decisions and is a basis for future regulations. The Flathead County Growth Policy was adopted on March 19, 2007, and is intended to provide guidance for growth in Flathead County.
Amendments to the Growth Policy may be warranted in order to adequately protect public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or general welfare in the process of community development. Amendments may be proposed by citizens or governing bodies and may involve changes to text .

CHAPTER 11: NEIGHBORHOOD

Montana state law allows any county or municipality in Montana to prepare a growth policy, pursuant to 76-1-106(1) M.C.A. While the growth policy is designed to be a comprehensive policy document, it may contain more site specific neighborhood plans pursuant to 76-1 601(4). Each neighborhood plan must be consistent with the growth policy. Land use decisions guided by a neighborhood plan should reflect a community's vision of how they intend to grow in the future. In the absence of a neighborhood plan, land use decisions are guided by the growth policy and existing regulatory documents, as applicable. The intent of this chapter is to provide a general framework to facilitate the preparation,

HOW THE WGVP GOALS MEET THE FLATHEAD COUNTY GROWTH PLAN VISION STATEMENTS

The WGVP meets all of the Flathead County defining community characteristics in the Growth Plan. The FC Growth Plan vision statements are embodied in the WGVP.

HOW THE WGVP GOALS ALIGN WITH THE FLATHEAD GROWTH PLAN GOALS:

The seven elements of the public's vision in the FC

i. Protect the
ii. Promote a diverse
iii. Minimize
iv. Maintain the identity of rural
v. Protect access to and interaction with parks and
vi. Properly manage and protect the natural and human
vii. Preserve the rights of private property

WGVP Goals [FC Growth Plan Vision Statements

1. Preserve Community Character and Sense of Place [i,
2. Create a Safe and Resilient Community [ii., iii.,
3. Enhance Community Communications and Participation [all County Growth Plan vision statements are important in
4. Support Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
5. Provide Seamless Transportation Connections [all County Growth Plan vision statements are important in this WGVP

Appendix H (continued) • Definitions

Action Areas - Action areas are determined by working group priorities for any goal area. Working groups evolve out of individual's or community needs (e.g. Wildfire Preparedness). The action priorities in Chapter 3 of WGVP are grouped in similar action areas. This Action Plan is a 'live' document and may be updated as needed by volunteer community member and stakeholder working groups in collaboration with Flathead County Planning & Zoning.

Climate Resiliency – the ability to prepare for change, adapt to, or recover from weather pattern changes. For example, the creation of the Community Wildfire Adaptive Program, to better prepare for the increased wildfire trends, began independently of this plan but quickly became Working Group model for other action areas, demonstrating how all the shared values, goals and vision are intertwined.

Declaration of Rights in the Montana Constitution
"…inalienable rights include the right to a clean and healthful environment and the rights of pursuing life's basic necessities, enjoying and defending their lives and liberties, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and seeking their safety, health and happiness in all lawful ways. In enjoying these rights, all persons recognize corresponding responsibilities."

Goal Statements - Goal statements identify the shared values and desired outcomes that the community wants to focus on. Goals are outcome statements that define what an organization is trying to accomplish, both programmatically and organizationally. The five Goal Statements in Chapter 3 were developed through a series of community

Healthy Lifestyles - see Declaration of Rights (above

sations and represent the aspirational outlook for West Glacier's future. They are overarching statements that describe the desired future of the area based on shared community values.

Principles - Principles are guiding characteristics, assumptions or fa
help understand the parameters of the goal. The Principles fall under
the goal statements to elaborate on the future setting, character, and
opportunities for the community for the next 10 to 15 years.

Sustainable Businesses – businesses that practice the triple botto
economic, ecological and social costs and benefits to ensure the sam
resources are available for the future of their business and the futur
community.

Sustainability/Resiliency – To maintain the quality of life in ways t
ecologically stable, socially responsible and economically viable.

Strategies - A Strategy is a statement of intent or expectation—a co
action that provides clarity on the methods for achieving the Princip
They are modifiable and flow with the Principles underlying.

Vision Statement - A vision is a big-picture statement communicati
future of an area or community, compelling action by identifying wh
matters most to the community. The West Glacier Vision Statement
Amendment to the Canyon Plan, is in alignment with Flathead Count
Growth Policy Vision Statements (see Appendix H).

Department of Interior Commendation to the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Special Commendation

presented to

Daniel Lundgren

The National Park Service expresses its appreciation for

the many contributions which you and your families have made since 1946 in sheltering and protecting the west entrance to Glacier National Park from inappropriate development by establishing and maintaining design standards and architectural themes for the village of West Glacier, reminiscent of the historic values contained in Glacier National Park. These design standards, which are often difficult to achieve even within national parks, have contributed to the effectiveness of the Park and its mission and have protected not only the picturesque values of Glacier National Park but also the underlying ecological systems as well.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

July 1, 1987

Appendix J

Vision Key Themes & Ideas from Stakeholders & the Public

West Glacier Vision

Key Themes & Ideas

February 10-14, 2020

Focus Groups Included: Rafting, Business, Transportation, Emergency Services, UMT, Conservation Roundtable *Groups to add: Tourism*

Public Meeting Ideas at end of doc

BUSINESS GOALS & CURRENT EFFORTS	
Topic	**Actions**
Envision a future where businesses have a role in maintaining a sense of place that visitors want to come back to. 1. Continue to reinvest in businesses, take stewardship of WGLAC to heart, want to maintain architecture standards. 2. Desire to understand the concerns of the community. Respect for the passion around WGLAC & the park. 3. Provide access for pedestrians/bikes, transportation issues, provide wildlife crossing/screening, sustainable river access, signage, maintain "parkatecture"/sense of place. 4. WGLAC feels like home. Want to keep the sense of discovery that is here. 5. Being inside the park gives a different perspective. Hiker/biker access is great, would be good to see other options besides cars for visitors (they do bike/boat). Increase biker access. 6. Have a unique situation here, not a lot of 'big gov't' business regs. *Need all the businesses in the corridor to support each other.* Easy for individuals to point out what's right/wrong, need to support each other, work towards a common goal. 7. Need to prepare the community for growth, it's coming, need to be ready. A lot of visitors are ok with the crowds, they don't know anything different. Residents need to get their head around the fact that visitation is going to continue to grow	1. Create an informal "business pledge" that all businesses can come together around, *encouraging* support and collaboration.

COMMUNICATIONS	
Topic	**Actions**

***Communication between businesses & community**

1. Hard community to communicate with- ex. p/t Landowners, VRBOs, Lots of feedback after-the-fact
2. Reinitiating of MCLUAC meetings has been impactful and beneficial
3. Some tension between business & community when it comes to housing, etc. ends up pushing employees onto Forest Service land to camp
4. Additional ways to communicate? Hit and miss community in the winter, not sure of other central location to do it. Get the word out about the mailing list so more people can get on it. A few informal sources.
5. Communication between WGLAC and canyon businesses, find a solution that works for everyone. No longer talking about growing business, looking at how to manage all the visitors.

***Communication between businesses**

1. No WGLAC/Canyon chamber or business group. Mostly just call who you know. Not even communication with the park about what is open/closed.
2. Community meetings (MCLUAC) are happening once a month, WGLAC board (3 ppl) is coming back up more people are starting to show up at those. Talking about bigger issues, employee housing, short term housing, etc. there is some effort, but it isn't communicated well, sign in PO, WGPA mailing list.
3. WGLAC Board isn't driven by businesses, more homeowners and 2nd homeowners, needs more business involvement.
4. Employees are largely college students.

Communications with Visitors

1. Recreation Access Display (RAD) https://www.nps.gov/applications/glac/dashboard/?r=v131 was vital last year, but not updated enough in the shoulder seasons. Pursuit installed monitors of RAD in their properties, super helpful for guests.
2. Need to be more strategic with signage in a scenic corridor – visitors expect signs – need to find a way to communicate beforehand, iPhone apps
3. Technology challenges, KOA address is technical considered Coram not WGLAC. 1 GTSR is the address for all the WGLAC businesses – need mapping technology to separate out specific businesses
4. Need education for visitors around options and what to do beforehand. Greater communication around parking, travel, etc.
5. Use education to talk about historic background (train noise). Recycling is a big issue, need more of it. Preserving this area for the future.
6. Businesses do quite a bit of advising on visitor activities and education.

1. Continue promoting communications related to MCLUAC throughout business and community communications.
2. Revitalize the MC Business group: Efforts to streamline/coordinate would be advantageous, including park businesses.
3. Determine if West Glacier addresses can be registered as West Glacier- mapping apps are incorrectly showing them as Coram or GTSR.
4. Identify key messages/education that businesses could be providing to visitors.

Wildfire Communications

1. Kari Geyser Glacier Institute- like to see more involvement in communications
2. Alli Ulwelling DNRC – involved with fire protection conversations, getting people more aware of summer fire season/conditions, help residents know what to do to aid their own situation – wildfire is super complicated with that many visitors, want to be more effective- getting people more aware of summer time conditions - through wildfire communication and education
3. Rebecca Knudsten Glacier Institute Big Creek – want to have more community involvement, be of use to others in the room- use them to get the word out to all the different ages they serve - website, fliers, emails, facebook, instagram; safety and wilderness skills (Big Creek serves 2000 kids and WG and 1000 adults, doing field base day and overnight courses, TED talks
4. Glacier Institute – with the park through a liaison, with the public mostly through electronics, looking to grow how and what they do – use education programs to teach safety (mostly outdoor safety, bears, LNT, etc.) – "lets talk about…." Series, opportunity in Columbia Falls for education
5. CWG Fire – trying to get past the GOB feeling, getting a new firehall in Coram, communication has struggled – new work with Monica/Alli (Montana House) around fire protection, hoping to improve attendance – rapid expansion & recent fires have heightened awareness. Have a firehall in WGLAC, just not roadside
6. emergency clinic in the summertime has been good addition
7. DNRC good example of good communications
8. WGCPA newsletter good news source
9. GLAC – park is involved in all kinds of traditional communication, interfacing with the communities happen mostly through the superintendent & deputy supt offices/projects, WGLAC gets it water from the park (special use permit). Work with landowners in the park around fire safety, wildlife issues, etc. – work with all the chambers in the area, state agencies, MDOT on HWY 2 – reworking with County and concessions – taken part in the fire conversations with residents.
10. Visitor trip planning – through website, press, FB, etc.
    a. Recreation Access Display – summer time, campgrounds and parking lot fill times
11. Most visitors plan before they get there, then modify if needed, use Visitor Centers
    a. Variable message sign next to the park entrance & in EGLAC (MDOT)
    b. What fire communication occurs outside of fire season?
        i. Rangers are responsible for evac
        ii. Park holds public meetings during fires
        iii. Haven't done any clearing on private land, but help advise who can do it

iv. work with all landowners in park (lake McD, NF, Marias Pass) communicate all fire/ wildlife issues
v. 1610 for info

12. Mary Tee – feels like it's hard to find out where to get information, feel the effects of being unincorporated, lots of part time residents – so much going on, how do you network everyone so that information is more easily available – lots of community concern around ingress/egress, river use is an issue as well

13. DNRC – speaking fire, preseason communication between the agencies & local fire department on presentations/education, utilize locals for communication to local communities – weekly calls during fire season to talk conditions, resources, etc., start getting fire conditions out through various paths,

14. Firesafe Flathead local group, OES, local media – a lot of inter-agency communication around fires
– still looking at how to use examples at best practices – very successful community meetings with interagency representation started last year at Montana House, more planned this year to keep the messages in front

15. How to talk to VRBO/part timers – how to get it in the houses? Difficult to get them to care about fire regulations, etc. , some budget limitations - Find grant $ for flyers, to give to specific locations. Propane fire rings are a huge problem for C/WGLAC

16. Easier to get people to pay attention during fire season, working with Fire Adaptive Montana

17. Eagle Transit – use all the usual communication tools (newspapers, news feeds on twitter & FB), city council meetings, chambers, utilize surveys and talk to people on buses, talk to businesses, work with park liaison for service shutdowns – talk to businesses around what they want to see for transportation in the valley, never saw comments on the shuttle system from visitors. need better communications between communities.

18. Conservation Roundtable: Coordinated communications between a variety of groups operating in Flathead County-roots are in conservation, sharing & communications more than advocacy

***What research/data do we need to plan for the future?**

VISITOR PLANNING, RECREATION PLANNING NEEDS

Actions

5. Clear reservable dates posted, RAD linked to walk-in data, bear safety info (rope to hang, canister)
6. Desire for more opportunities for adventure outside experiences
7. Keep park road open to avalanche

Rafting:

1. Permitting/Data – use and increase in use of private use but numbers aren't concrete
2. UM Data gathering for the past 3 years – tried to overlap anecdotal & hard data – complications around knowing for sure which is private draft and which is public (rafting company) – distinguished type of craft . 2019 was last round of funding – trying to use $$ from conservancy to do river monitoring as well

3. Helpful for UM to have evidence of problems that have occurred – feel free to send in more pics 4. Forest Service Fee? Not likely anytime soon, but it is a tool in the toolbox – voluntary permit. More interaction needed from the Forest Service to the public around river use 5. CRMP timeline – team is working on writing longer segments out of what was the PA – tricky b/c it's a complex situation, plus following the VUM from the interagency group and how to include that information in a plan – summertime draft release.	

EXTENDING BUSINESS SEASON	
Topic	**Actions**
1. **Need a critical mass** of businesses to do that, can't be just one. Volume drives volume. Extending lodging in Apgar longer, staffing is a challenge, volume of visitors would be tough – would likely be local, weather would be important. Belton open on weekend in the winter, margins are really thin for that time of year. Other big parks, people come for the winter, just takes time. 2. **Lack of winter activities**. Keep park road open to avalanche for the winter. Need more activity options. Starting to have people walk in to rent snowshoes/ski's, wanted to come to park to see something different. Not enough to keep businesses busy. Need the amenities to get people to come. Staffing is tough, pool is small. Winter housing is difficult. 3. **Impression that the park is closed** in the winter. Create a culture where people want to come, events, packaging, creating a reason for people to come. People visiting Whitefish in the winter aren't the answer, a lot of them don't come with cars. An average 4-day trip that people tend to come in winter, ski for 3, then park for a day. Winter/glacier is scary in winter, need guided tours. Climate change is the biggest problem, what kind of snow year is it going to be. Huge factor for investing in a fleet of rental gear. 4. Road being closed in June, doesn't really hurt the rafting companies very much. Jul/Aug crowding is forcing people to come in other seasons. 5. **More access into the park** would be good. Know they also have staffing issues, surprised by the lack of access in the park. Park will be key to extending season or winter visitation. 6. **Staffing strategies needed outside of high season**, might be able to put together a skeleton crew. Vision to strive for, increased commerce for a longer season. Hoping that hunters lair lays the groundwork for a longer season. Year-round rest/bar/hotel is interesting, used to groom xc ski trails and rent cabins…	1.Businesses coordinating around e-bikes for off-season. 2.Grow winter activities: Park specified winter activities could be promoted. More amenities/infrastructure/events needed. 3.Staffing strategies needed outside of high season.

not enough amenities to make a go of it. Increase shoulder seasons, stay open until mid-oct, but lots of other places close so no options for food/drink. Get businesses to stay
open longer and spread the season out.

7. Year round would be great as a business, good for employees as well. **Housing is a huge issue** for them, they don't have any. Finding a way to become sustainable year-round, spread shoulder season.

NATURAL RESOURCES & SUSTAINABILITY

Topic	Actions
Recycling needs are significant. 1. Would like to find a solution, don't have the end facilities. Pursuit looking at ways to increase recycling, since volume is important. Lost recycling access at county dumps sites. 2. Need to work on **reducing use** as well 3. Travelers expect recycling, water bottle filling stations, etc. 4. Need to build support at the county commission level for increasing options **Entry beautification:** 5. Grant (from BNSF) to pretty up the RR underpass, painting, landscaping, weed removal – won't know for a few months, potential for other grants as well **2019 Visitation Briefing**: 6. Presentation to businesses about what use looked like last year, park staff, to help prepare for the coming summer. **Sustainability:** 7. Keeping things authentic, education about aquatic invasive species, fires, climate change, recycling. Lots of pressure to walk the walk on sustainability, MT will feel impacts first, need to prove we care. 8. Matt Cox Coram/WGLAC Fire – concerned about the pace of growth, protection for the community, don't want it to look like Gatlinburg, rapidity of growth and keeping up with the resources **River Access:** 9. Status of WSR Plan not largely known: Don't know what's going on the with plan, hoping the CRMP will be able to guide for the next 20-30 years 10. Complaints around outfitters, most are on the NFK, barely use 1k user days in a year – try not to go to the NFK on the weekends because of how busy it is 11. 8 mile stretch on MFK is main use, they don't park cars/trailers at put-ins/take-outs – crowding and	1. Identify who is doing recycle/reuse advocacy & campaigns in the FV & determine ways to collaborate. 2. Include 2019 summer visitation summary in vision plan as a description of current conditions. 3. Evaluate space and land ownership constraints in redesign considerations/ suggestions for WG river access. 4. Evaluate viability/interest in the following ideas: a. Connector trail from Columbia Falls to Hungry Horse b. Ebike options c. Buses from the valley d. County trails plan – WGLAC specific plan e. redirect people to valley and HH Reservoir f. could geotourism map be expanded 5. Evaluate the following suggested CALURS text amendments: a. commercial and residential water quality standards

safety issues are private users

b. dark sky guidelines
c. cell towers

12. Moccasin & Blankenship are the biggest problems, Blankenship in/out is currently on county property – Forest Service owns land on other side of the river, need to make improvements to the area to be able to use it
13. Local users/nearby visitors, know it's not permitted – don't get a permit on Smith or Salmon, come to the Flathead
14. Companies are having a harder time getting in and out of river accesses – major increase in people using the river, cars/trailers at put-ins-take-outs, impacts of waste, congested parking
15. Companies are held to a higher standard than private users, encourage tourists to use them

***Facilities/ED/LEO**

16. Restroom for WGLAC take-out, hard facility – garbage cans/dumpster
17. More parking, not sure how much would be available
18. Separate exit to ease congestion
19. Circulation design to help make up-in/take-out faster
20. Changing areas – more direction/signage
21. Signage around proper etiquette/river use, take-out/put-in
22. Online test/permit around education, etiquette, LNT, etc.
23. Signs before loss of cell service, pull outs, to remind people to have a permit
24. Greater enforcement of rules/regs
25. Need more LEO's from FS
26. Make NFK more pedestrian/bike friendly – paths, signs, etc.
27. Wildlife crossings on HWY 2: not in the forseeable future, would only happen with new projects – Badrock canyon is the only rebuild planned in the near future (there is a website where projects planned can be accessed on a map) …and resurfacing from Hungry Horse to Nyack -pavement preservation is going on in the Hwy corridor soon – safety funded pool could help (safety funded wildlife crossings not in the plans)

Conservation

What are the unique characteristics in West Glacier that are of conservation value?

1. Flathead Land Trust: worked with a handful of landowners in WGLAC, prime wildlife corridor, CE's are an option, acquisitions for public access (partner with MTFWP, USFWS), use community meetings and one on one meetings to inform value of conservation and tax benefits; need to heighten awareness.
2. People transportation impacts on wildlife: More people coming by bus – need to start in the valley.
   Flathead River, Coalition for Canyon preservation – stopped the 4-lane of HWY 2 – chance to limit

d. tree preservations standards maintaining that through standards, need to put overlay of transportation/water/county trails plan
e. noise standards
f. discuss expanding the zoning area to include the lower canyon (mention was made that the lower canyon during neighborhood planning days was not interested in the regulatory part of the canyon plan (the two attendees from Conservation Corp expressed interest in starting this up again).

its impacts. HWY 2 genetic bottleneck, near WGLAC – bears aren't crossing the highway (Kate Kendall, John Waller studies), - need for wildlife crossings

   a. Waterton-Glacier dark sky designation – adopt dark sky friendly lighting
   b. County Planning/MTDOT disconnect around wildlife corridors, HWYs, etc.

2. Scenic corridor – doorstep to glacier: Peacefulness, high quality experiences, timelessness, vision of a fun vacation experience, swirl of families, without cars, need for transportation alternatives.
   a. Native vegetation, trees
   b. Dark skies -growth of light pollution is at greater rate than the growth of people; Dark Skies has made concerted effort to accommodate astro tourism - working on some state park designations and have a MT map for dark sky attractions
   c. Walking on the bridge, looking at the river
   d. International, happy

3. Natural resource concerns around West Glacier:
4. Water quality concerns – oil trains, septic standards, well development
5. Wildlife connectivity- Laura Reynolds wants to do a survey of animals for DOT; Bradanderson@nps.gov (was) recording wildlife crossings on Hwy 2 (?); need to study what the Salish have done as an example; see Banf too - what are the success rates and how are they working

What steps could be taken to mitigate these concerns?

1. Changes to country planning to allow for greater coordination between DOT
2. Scenic corridors to limit signs
3. Adopting dark sky friendly lighting ordinance for WGLAC
4. Trails overlay as part of the corridor planning – CALURS overlay - Transportation overlay zone
5. Opportunities for Cons. Easements on private land (Pursuit)
6. Waste issues growing fast especially septic, Garbage disposal, bear proof containers, recycling opportunities
7. County growth plan - will be starting this year, need updates- are other gateway communities doing this- yes- Conservation/recreation plan (ala Estes Park)
8. Trail connector from Columbia Falls to Hungry Horse

Outstanding questions/reflections from Conservation Roundtable: What do people want to do? What are the alternatives?

   a. How can Whitefish/Columbia Falls play a supporting role in this – bus from Whitefish

b. People are coming to MT for dark skies
c. Crown Of The Continent Geotourism map
d. Redirect people to other options/times

e. How do recreation and tourism affect the conservation values in and around West Glacier?
f. Park is filling fast, reaching saturation, transportation issues will be dealt with in Park with bandaids until further notice; changes/ideas need to be initiated by the community.
Examples are Arches, Moab, Estes Park
g. Transportation is affected by all these concerns in #4 above, need to think into the future with bussing
h. Need for water quality monitoring, minimal amount done by GNP and state, is more needed?
i. What steps could be taken to mitigate those effects? need to look at WG area as a snapshot - bike group, gateway trails connectivity, an effort to map the trails area, need to work with Backroads Bike tour outfitter (biggest group for bikes in valley)
j. Are there safety issues that need to be addressed related to natural resource concerns (i.e., human/bear conflicts, hazmat trains, etc.)?

1. oil trains
2. river access, overuse
3. how to hold on to present water quality

TRANSPORTATION	
Topic	**Actions**
***Connectivity between businesses/Amtrak/Park** 28. UBER driver exists in WG now 29. E-bikes, external shuttle system – bike path has been great but could be extended 30. There are two car rental places in the valley that will leave cars at Amtrak (if they have rentals) 31. Pre-booking is key and visitors need to know that 32. E-bikes are a new opportunity to connect to a wider range of ages/abilities ***2nd Egress and/or Access** ● As things get busier, it's going to be necessary. Connecting the dots challenge with BNSF – need it for an emergency egress if nothing else ● Sheriff and County road crew has a plan for emergencies to unlock private road. ***Parking/Transportation** 1. Need to do something. Potential benefit for businesses outside of the park 2. GTSR has some plans for more parking. Transportation after parking is a bigger issue if parking is outside the park	1. Need to explore feasibility for a range of transportation options and transportation infrastructure needs. 2. Explore e-bike system expansion needs. 3. Explore private external shuttle feasibility 4. Research: What is limit on GLAC transportation funding, how far can ubers travel to, if agreements/contract rules could be changed, what would the perfect shuttle system look like? 5. Explore alternatives for secondary egress- for emergencies and/or visitor exits.

6. Work on bringing speed limit in HWY 2 down to 45 from KOA, as well as from the pass.
7. Need a left turn lane into the KOA.

3. Also, using more shuttles increases use of trails, damage to trails. Spread use out to Forest Service land
4. Seemed like traffic was better this summer was better than expected
5. Removing parallel parking, left turn lane, flashing lights, etc. helped make it smoother
6. MDOT is a big partner, need to work with them on communication with guests about locations
7. Provide second entrance into town, over tracks near golf course?
8. Work on bringing speed limit in HWY 2 from 60 down to 45 from KOA.
9. Speed limit, lots of trailers/RV's visitors. Transportation is a problem, have lots of visitors without cars (RV drivers), how to get them into the park and around the park – external park shuttle would be great. Signage along corridor, scenic highway corridor. Visitors love it, very special place, need some other access.
10. Speed limit/access out of WGLAC, find way to work through the problems (RR, private land).
11. Need a left turn lane into the KOA.
12. Speed concerns from the other direction (traveling West on HWY 2 out of the canyon) too, dangerous for Belton guests. Problems with parking, need communication between areas of the park.

Rafting-Related Shuttles:

1. Shuttle company needed for private users, so they aren't using parking areas
2. Alternative take-out/put-ins needed for companies at high use areas
3. Transportation management is key – where do we want parking? Should there be a valley to park shuttle? Who will pay for it?
4. Uncertainty around what the shuttle will look like in the park, but will be some kind of shuttle – labor contract, this summer, at the same level/potential improvement? (service contract will require a profit for the shuttle)

Emergency Services/Transportation Issues:

1. FLAP is administered by Fed DOT – MDOT applies for those grants as well, handled out of the Helena office, contact to be sent.
2. Tom Schneider Eagle Transit – work with sheriff if they need buses for evac, how to deal with different emergencies, transportation is about moving people around – like park and community models, care about the economic value of the park to the county – interconnected system between communities and the park – use transportation to direct where people go

3. James Freyholze MDOT – traffic engineer, manage HWY 2 and entrance road to the bridge – safety
   concerns around backups and traffic congestion

4. MDOT – signs, work closely with the county on communication and development, a lot of
   one-on-one conversations around traffic concerns, using public relations firm to get the word out about public projects. EOS – maintenance staff is in contact with county groups around safety
5. GNESA is a source of communication between agencies on safety, Updates on the radio around projects – required for MDOT project contracts
6. Overpass to get out of campground? not in the plans currently
7. Safety review in WG could be used for a particular project, many projects are initiated by calls into the office and they investigate (note, there is a website to report incidents and concerns for problem areas)
8. Concern about the loss of shuttle system right now. Number of visitors coming – area isn't made for 1 mil, let alone 3 mil – need to upgrade the system to be able to accommodate visitors
9. GLAC needing to "flush" entrance stations to keep people having to stop when traffic is backed up to the bridge…pedestrian traffic in WGLAC is causing a lot of the backup on the entrance road, hard to get through 2 crosswalks in one go. Ongoing studies around what is happening in WGLAC to cause traffic backups
10. MDOT will do studies/counts – not a lot of opportunity to change anything on the road
11. Hwy 2 & entrance road up for safety review. Crash data, potential crashes – could prioritize funding to mitigate them, Not a lot of bad crashes in the area
12. Issues with getting traffic merging onto HWY 2 west is that people don't know they don't' have to stop – causes some accidents
13. Make a 4-lane highway all the way from Badrock to WGLAC (note - which would only feed more cars faster into the bottleneck)

LAND USE REGULATIONS: CALURS: *What's working/not working?*

Topic	Actions
1. Created in 1994, hasn't kept up with the times, but has sort of worked, looking at the potential for amending that plan. CALURS – wanted WGLAC to grow, but not be a strip of businesses on the highway 2. Deals with some issues that are specific to this area, around tourism, maintaining character. Hunters Lair is following the plan to not affect the viewshed. Goes farther than the Canyon Plan. 3. Some dated components, but is a good guide for historic preservation 4. Committee needs to be looked at, in terms of makeup. People just going straight to the County Commission, rather than taking the steps. Need to repower the committee.	1. Committee needs to be repowered with makeup evaluated for best representation.

5. Has protected the community, no tall buildings, no chains. Brings people together to talk before a major land use. Perhaps need to bring minor land use to the same committee. Need to get County Commission on board with respect to the committee.
6. Has put up guardrails on development that seems to be appropriate
7. No significant comments regarding changes that could improve CALURS.
8. Soften CALURS to ease providing employee housing – septic is the big issue (campgrounds require subdivision review, remove that requirement for providing employee housing)

HOUSING	
Topic	**Actions**
Seasonal Housing 1. Seasonal housing has been lost to VRBO property conversions. 2. Housing is a big issue for all the businesses 3. A lot of employees live on property, camp – not sure that's ok 4. 3-person board advising planning/zoning in the county – DEQ/County only investigate if they get a formal written complaint, trying to walk the line between business needs and environment/health	

EXISTING CONDITIONS	
Topic	**Actions**
1. Big visitation increases can create challenges; rental car deficiencies 2. Airport expansion due to bring more people during high season. 3. Lack of winter activities. Need more activity options. 4. Rafting businesses busy until late Oct. 5. See **2019 Visitation Briefing** for summary. 6. There are sign restrictions in the Middle Canyon as well as along the Highway 2 corridor which outlined in the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System in Chapter 4. 7. There are no general night sky or noise thresholds associated with development in the Canyon. However, if a property owner applies for either a Minor or a Major Land Use, condition of approval very well may include dark sky compatible lighting, if applicable, and "quiet hours."	

8. Some businesses are purchasing new land and trying to determine its best use.

Transportation

Seemless transit system
County-wide Public Transit opportunity
Electric cars- noise sensitivity Digital drive thru, maps at VC Uber & Lyft
Carpool initiative &/or promotion Satellite parking
Riverbend overpass over BNSF
Train service between WG, Columbia Falls, Whitefish & East
Glacier Tunnel/overpass/underpass
Look at a balance/combination of transit options such as buses between key points to offer a comprehensive system WG as the hub of the wheel, connecting from all of the other towns
Economic development-spreading the tourism dollars throughout the valley

Preservation of Community Character & Place

Opportunity to Masterplan
Garbage & Recycling priorities and desires from visitors Invisible Infrastructure
Strict building codes to support our values
Natural resources are visible, architecture is integrated into the landscape, utilize planning regulations to retain Egalitarian development- affordable housing
Historic housing status- dedications, plaques, interpretation/education Historic layout is fine
Lack of commercialization and sign pollution Peace & quiet
Timelessness

Tourism

Identify & recommend alternative activities
for visitors Expect increasing visitors (more
than 3mil) Community informed consent of
development
Strong CALURS LU Plan
Affordable access to the parks and camping opportunities for working families
$ from businesses = impact fees

Natural Resources, Land Stewardship, Waste Management

Peace & quiet
The River-Middle Fork of the
Flathead River Wildfire- healthy
resilient forest
Clean robust healthy environment
Easily enter the park and disperse to get away
from people Wildlife corridor
Native vegetation
Historic landscape features-birch trees never replaced
after construction Huckleberries
Lack of poisonous
snakes Mountains,
scenic views
Clean water from river-
freeflowing Ecosystem
Wildflowers
Unique convergence of
watersheds Restricted air
traffic
Flora & fauna- native,
cutthroat trout Climate
change is visible
Wild
bears
Dark
skies
Clean
air

Recreation

Performance arts
Center
Bikability/walkabilit
y
4-season recreation
E-bikes- expansion of
trails Parking needs
For locals during off-
season Add more ways
to enjoy trails Resort
tax
Quiet winter experiences, winter can be scary for newbees/out
of area visitors No poison oak

Community Health

Recycling systems
MCLUAC-plays the role of a community council- community preservation
association newsletter Sustainable community initiative
Improved leadership who are skilled & can think
strategically Food, housing, laundry for seasonal
workers
Employee housing options/support for small businesses- centralized housing with
kitchens and bathrooms Year-round affordable rental opps for USFS employee
Education- bears, pet management, trash management, exotic weeds, invasive
species- *for residents & visitors LE presence, alert/aware
Working septic and
infrastructure A safe
community
Transportation for workers living
outside of WG Need multiple access
points for emergencies
Healthy/robust transparent/proactive communication
channels/public comment Potential for good leadership
Town council umbrella group-clearing house

Our physical health, our social happiness, and our economic well-being will be sustained only by all of us working in partnership as thoughtful, effective stewards of our natural resources.

Conservatives for Responsible

Stewardship

Ronald Reagan